



MS AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

MS AUSTRALIA ARGUES FOR TRANSPARENT PBS SYSTEM AT SENATE INQUIRY

For immediate release Thursday 21 July 2011

MS Australia will argue for a fair and transparent system for listing medications on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) on behalf of people living with multiple sclerosis (MS) at a hearing of the Senate Inquiry into the Federal Government's policy in Melbourne today.

MS Australia's Robert Pask will appear before the Inquiry at 2.00 pm to present the organisation's submission.

Last month, MS Australia participated in a campaign led by the Consumer Health Forum calling on the Government to reverse their February 2011 decision to have all recommendations for PBS listings determined by the Cabinet.

"As an organisation representing people living with a chronic illness, we believe it is essential that medications required to treat symptoms and allow people to maintain as independent a life as possible are affordable," Mr Pask said.

"Affordable treatments for people with MS like me help us to remain in the workforce and participate in our communities.

"A disease that MS is an unpredictable disease in the way it affects people in relapses. Because of this, the use of medicines is a high priority in trying to influence the disease's impact."

MS Australia's submission to the Inquiry argues the deferral of key medications in this way would result in:

- Delays in access to key medications for people living with chronic illness;
- A lack of transparency in the new process; and

- The politicisation of the PBS listing process.

“Medicines for chronic illnesses shouldn’t just be viewed as a cost – they are an investment in the well being of all Australians and reduce demand in other parts of the system,” Mr Pask said.

“The health of people with chronic illnesses like multiple sclerosis shouldn’t be placed behind by the Government’s short term budget problems.”

Ends

Note to editors and producers: Interviews with Mr Pask can be arranged upon request.

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