



24 June 2016

Listing of Xofigo on the Medical Benefits Schedule

Bayer Australia Limited
ABN 22 000 138 714

I was very upset to read in your letter that you are a patient with advanced prostate cancer with metastatic bone-disease.

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You were correct to highlight in your letter (23 April 2016) that Bayer's treatment for prostate cancer has not been publicly funded in Australia. I can say it has been an enormously challenging process both for Bayer Australia and the Federal Department of Health to make this innovative treatment available in Australia.

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You were correct in quoting that Bayer's position back in 2014 was "to provide Australian patients with access to Xofigo (radium-223) in a timely manner". Bayer staff members are still doing everything they can to make it available in Australia. Unfortunately it is taking a lot longer than planned.

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A difference in policy regarding how the Federal Health Department enables the listing of some new innovative cancer drugs on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (to which radium-223 has been compared) versus how they list innovation technologies like radium-223 via the Medical Benefits Schedule has resulted in significant delays. Bayer is still advocating the Federal Government implement a pragmatic solution in order to bridge this policy misalignment and enable the supply of radium-223 to Australian patients through a Government subsidy.

In the two years following the Medical Services Advisory Committee recommendation of the listing of Xofigo, Bayer senior executives have had several meetings with the Federal Department of Health officials, Ministers, Parliamentarians and advisers, highlighting the benefits of Xofigo for patients. Numerous options have been explored and Bayer believes there is a workable solution possible.

Bayer will continue to advocate for this solution. You could consider bringing it to the attention of your representative, the Federal Member for Higgins the Hon. Kelly O'Dwyer MP or directly with the Minister for Health and Sport the Hon. Sussan Ley MP.

Regards,


Adrian Dolahenty
Senior External Affairs Manager