

## Commonwealth Department of Health Review of the Efficient Funding of Chemotherapy (EFC) program

In the 2020-21 Budget, the Government announced a review of the current Efficient Funding of Chemotherapy (EFC) Program to ensure that the access and funding arrangements for chemotherapy services reflect a transparent, accountable, efficient and equitable model of service.

The EFC Program provides funding for chemotherapy medicines used for the treatment of cancer that are administered through infusion or injection at public or private hospitals. Not all chemotherapy medicines are provided through the EFC Program but may be subsidised through the broader Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

Cancer Council, [the Clinical Oncology Society of Australia](#), the [Medical Oncology Group of Australia](#) and the [Australasian Leukaemia and Lymphoma Group](#) made a joint submission proposing solutions to improve patient access to chemotherapy, particularly in rural and remote regions, to minimise wastage and improve cost effectiveness and to improve current processes including administration and standards.

We offered the following suggestions for consideration in the review of the EFC program -:

- Provide financial support and appropriate IT resources to enable electronic prescribing to sites without on-site compounding capabilities as a pre-requisite to providing complete, quality cancer care.
- Invest in tele-health/tele-chemotherapy/tele-oncology to support remote supervision, pharmacist screening and checking of medicines, including Medicare funding for the use of tele-health in oncology and clinical trials.
- Address the ability to have timely access to medications without significant expense to the pharmacy or hospital, especially when the medication expires with best intent to maintain access.
- Third party compounders should prioritise stability testing of cancer therapies, based on the preferences of pharmacists and prescribers, to potentially improve the stability of compounded cancer therapies with a short expiry.
- Improve support for the delivery of complete cancer services in regional and remote areas, including funding for systemic anti-cancer therapy, supportive care medications, and associated services such as palliative care, closer to home for patients.
- Facilitate the appropriate workforce required for the delivery of both cancer care and the additional education and training to improve health professional competence. This will ensure quality and expertise required to deliver quality cancer care in regional and rural sites. (COSA 2021; ACSQHC 2020)

Once considered by the review team, a copy of our submission will be available on the review website: <https://www.pbs.gov.au/info/reviews/efficient-funding-of-chemotherapy-review>.

