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Historic PBS listing of epilepsy cannabis medicine gains support of CA Clinics

CA Clinics embraces the addition of Epidyolex to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) list as recommended by their Advisory Committee for the treatment of Dravet syndrome. This will be the first time in Australia's history to see a medicinal cannabis product funded by the PBS.

The move brings the industry a huge step forward to becoming more affordable and accessible to patients around Australia. Even outside of subsidised treatment, we've already seen a 15-fold increase in cannabis utilisation over the last two years, according to FreshLeaf Analytics' H1 2021 report.

Epidyolex is manufactured by UK pharmaceutical company GW Pharmaceuticals and is a cannabidiol (CBD) product for children suffering from rare forms epilepsy, such as Dravet syndrome (DS) and Lennox-Gastaut syndrome (LG), which are resistant to conventional medications. In this case, Epidyolex will be subsidised only for sufferers of Dravet syndrome.

KEY POINTS:

- Epidyolex is the first epileptic medicinal cannabis product to be subsidised by PBS
- PBS listing is estimated to benefit 116 patients per year in Australia
- Patients would usually pay more than A\$24,000 a year on Epidyolex
- They will now pay \$41.30 per script or \$6.60 with concession card
- According to FreshLeaf Analytics, patients (of all conditions) spend A\$359 on average a month on medicinal cannabis



Dr Mark Hardy

Medical Director and Addiction Specialist at CA Clinics commented: “This is a huge jump for Australia’s medicinal cannabis industry. As an Authorised Prescriber, my role is limited in what I can do for patients who cannot afford these treatments. Where indicated, I must currently direct them to other PBS listed products, some of which have already been tried without success, or carry unacceptable side effects. I hope this creates an environment in which more medicinal cannabis products could be considered for financial support by the Australian Government, and in turn open accessibility to a greater cohort of patients.”



Cassandra Hunt

Managing Director of CA Clinics says: “The availability of Epidyolex on the PBS is great news for sufferers of Dravet syndrome, and sets a precedent for more affordable patient access to future medicinal cannabis products registered in the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods.”

For Media Enquiries:

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CA Clinics is the first pioneering network of medicinal cannabis clinics in Australia, helping patients with chronic conditions to access better health outcomes and improve their quality of life. Its focus on a wide offering of specialised healthcare professionals such as in oncology, pain, palliative care and rehab sets it apart from other medicinal cannabis clinics.




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