



**RESEARCH  
AUSTRALIA**

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PBAC Secretariat  
MDP 952  
Department of Health and Ageing  
GPO Box 9848  
Canberra ACT 2601

8 October 2014

To whom it may concern,

***Re: Consultation on Authority Required Medicines - November 2014 PBAC Agenda***

MS Research Australia is writing to support the inclusion of indicated MS medications on the Authority Required (STREAMLINED) list. As the sole organisation dedicated to funding MS discoveries and coordinating MS research in Australia, we are proud to advocate on behalf of people affected by this disease. One area of particular importance to MS Research Australia is the availability of affordable and effective treatments that can improve the lives of people with MS.

The inclusion of current MS treatments on the streamlined authority list has a number of tangible benefits for people with MS, for managing clinicians, and for the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme more broadly. As of May 2014, Natalizumab (Tysabri) and Interferon beta 1a (Avonex) have already been included on the streamlined list. MS Research Australia supports the inclusion of all MS medications on this list, in order to ensure appropriate patient access to all approved MS treatments. Equitable and consistent access to all disease-modifying therapies is of paramount importance for avoiding potential 'first-line' prescribing preferences for streamlined medications over non-streamlined, ensuring the individuals' circumstances are appropriately taken into account when developing a treatment strategy.

In addition, greater application of streamlined authority will markedly increase the quality of clinical consultations. By reducing time spent on the phone, patients will be afforded greater time to discuss symptoms and disease management with their clinician, thus maximising consultation value.

Streamlined prescribing would also represent an advantageous opportunity to generate substantial cost savings both for the PBS and for health care providers, by eliminating a major administrative burden on both services. The volume of telephone calls requesting Authority to Prescribe exceeds tens of thousands each year.

At the March 2014 PBAC meeting, it was accepted that relapsing-remitting MS is a stable condition, with the medications in question having well established, stable dosing regimens that are not susceptible to misuse. This is an important consideration that should be rigorously assessed for each medication currently under consideration, however, MS Research Australia supports that under appropriate and well-defined prescribing conditions the risks to patient safety from streamlined authority are minimised, and the potential gain is great. MS Research Australia supports the inclusion of all current, evidence-based MS treatments within a Streamlined Authority definition.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matthew Miles".

Dr Matthew Miles  
Chief Executive Officer  
MS Research Australia