

Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> October 2014

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

Dear PBAC Secretariat,

**Re: Lemtrada® (Alemtuzumab) – November, 2014 PBAC Agenda.**

MS Australia is writing to support the inclusion of the relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis (MS) treatment, Lemtrada® (Alemtuzumab) on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). We refer to our previous public submission to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee supporting the subsidisation of Lemtrada® (Alemtuzumab) (5/6/14) and wish to reiterate our support for the treatment to be listed on the PBS.

As the national peak body for the MS community in Australia and on behalf of our state member organisations, we are proud to advocate for better access to affordable treatments that can improve the lives of people with MS.

Lemtrada® (Alemtuzumab) has been shown in clinical trials to reduce relapse rates and to slow the rate of disability progression in people with relapsing remitting MS compared to another market available treatment, Rebif® (interferon  $\beta$ -1a). In several clinical trials, Lemtrada® (Alemtuzumab) demonstrated a significant improvement in relapse rates compared to Rebif®. Notably, 78% of patients receiving Lemtrada® (Alemtuzumab) were relapse free 2 years after receiving treatment, compared to 59% of patients receiving interferon  $\beta$ -1a. More patients receiving Lemtrada® (Alemtuzumab) reported reductions in disability that were sustained for 12 months, and fewer patients reported sustained accumulation of disability compared to interferon  $\beta$ -1a. Furthermore, these benefits were maintained over time. In an ongoing open label extension of the randomised clinical trials, around 82% of participants did not receive a third treatment course in year 3, and by the fourth year, 79% of participants still had not received any additional courses of Lemtrada® (Alemtuzumab).

These findings place Lemtrada® (Alemtuzumab) among the strongest disease modifying therapies available and provide an important option for people with an

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active form of the disease who are at risk of frequent, aggressive relapses which can leave them with permanent disability.

Indeed, the challenges faced by people with MS can be significant and can have a devastating impact on families, and the wider community. Relapses can result in short-term or long-term disability, resulting in the need for physical and psychological care and support, medical investigations, treatments and hospitalisation.

Being able to better manage and limit the impact of relapses helps give people with MS greater certainty to get on with their lives, and disease modifying treatments like Lemtrada® (Alemtuzumab) help them to maintain important parts of their lifestyle for longer, such as employment, physical activity and exercise, as well as travel and socialising with friends.

Whilst these elements may not seem particularly significant, together, they give a person with MS purpose, focus, independence and drive which can be very useful in maintaining a high quality of life and staying on top of their symptoms.

MS Australia appreciates the PBAC considering this treatment for inclusion on the PBS. This medication will make a valuable addition to the medications available to people with MS and their neurologists giving them greater choice and flexibility to find the treatment option that helps them the most.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Debra Cerasa', written over a horizontal line.

Debra Cerasa  
Chief Executive Officer  
MS Australia