DR MONIQUE RYAN
KOOYONG'S INDEPENDENT

Dr Monique Ryan Welcomes Approval of Trikafta for Cystic Fibrosis, but Calls for Urgent PBS Reform

Dr Monique Ryan, Independent Federal MP for Kooyong, today welcomed the long-overdue listing of Trikafta on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), a landmark moment in the fight against one of Australia's most common and severe genetic diseases. However Dr Ryan noted that - while this listing marks a critical win - Australians are still waiting too long for approvals of new medications on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

"This is a day of relief and gratitude for the CF community," said Independent Federal Member for Kooyong, Dr Monique Ryan. "I congratulate the Health Minister, the Hon. Mark Butler, for this change. But it shouldn't have taken more than three years for us to get here."

Trikafta —a triple-combination therapy developed by Vertex Pharmaceuticals—targets the genetic cause of cystic fibrosis. Trikafta treatment dramatically reduces infections, cuts hospitalisations, decreases need for lung transplants, and increases life expectancy. Today's announcement will enable approximately 250 Australians with rare and ultra rare CFTR gene mutations aged more than two to finally access the drug at an affordable, subsidised rate.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) first granted Trikafta approval in March 2021 for patients aged 12 and over with at least one CFTR gene F508del mutation. The drug was listed on the PBS for that cohort in April 2022. In December 2022, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) recommended expanding PBS access to Trikafta to children aged 6–11 years, but it took more than three years of sustained advocacy from patients, families, clinicians, Cystic Fibrosis Australia, and parliamentarians for that listing. From 1 July 2025 Trikafta will be available to Australians aged two years and older with at least one responsive CFTR mutation. While the expanded access is a major win for the CF community, the drawn-out process highlights systemic issues in Australia's PBS reimbursement system.

Dr Ryan, a former paediatrician and Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Cystic Fibrosis, wrote to Health Minister Mark Butler in March 2023 to demand urgent action. She highlighted that the PBS listing had stalled despite clear clinical evidence and a positive PBAC recommendation. "I spoke with families from Kooyong whose children's health suffered during that time. It takes an average of 466 days for medicines to move from TGA approval to PBS listing in Australia. Global best practice is 60 days. We need our health regulatory processes to be more transparent and efficient. Fast tracking high-impact therapies should be our standard of care.""This isn't just about one medicine—it's about building a health system that delivers when it matters most," said Dr Ryan. "Trikafta represents hope. Hope shouldn't have to wait."

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