



Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee

Reply to: PBAC@health.gov.au

Coroner Dimitra Dubrow
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006
c/o team12@courts.vic.gov.au

Dear Coroner Dubrow,

Re: COR 2022 001597 Investigation into the death of RDZ – response to Recommendation (i) on behalf of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC).

I write on behalf of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) in response to correspondence received 29 November 2024 from the Coroner's Registrar, regarding Recommendation (i) from COR 2022 001597.

I note in your Finding into passing without inquest COR 2022 001597 the following Recommendation:

- (i) *That the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee consider liquid paraffin and/or other lubricant laxatives for recommendation to be added to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme for use in chronic constipation or faecal impaction not adequately controlled with first line interventions such as bulk-forming agents.*

I referred your letter to the PBAC Executive where it was considered on 30th January 2025.

The PBAC Executive is a sub-committee that supports the PBAC, comprised of the Chair and Deputy Chair of the PBAC, the Chair of the Drug Utilisation Sub-Committee, the Chair of the Economics Sub-Committee, and a consumer nominee from the PBAC.

The Executive expressed their profound sorrow to read of the circumstances that led to the passing of this young person. With this letter we express our condolences to family, friends and community.

The PBAC Executive noted that the request to list a liquid paraffin product on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for constipation, such as in the brand Little Parachoc[®], requires that the PBAC makes a positive recommendation to the Minister for Health and Aged Care. The factors which the PBAC need to consider include the comparative effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the medicine compared to other available therapies.

To start this process, the PBAC Executive asked the Department of Health and Aged Care to write to the pharmaceutical companies responsible for liquid paraffin products available in Australia for constipation, to seek their interest in PBAC consideration to list their product on the PBS.

The PBAC will consider the request to list liquid paraffin on the PBS for constipation as soon as practicable following receipt of all the necessary information. While the Department will write to relevant pharmaceutical companies, pharmaceutical companies are private entities, and each company makes its own decisions about its own medicines.

Neither the PBAC, Department or the Government can compel companies to list their medicines on the PBS. With the consent of the relevant pharmaceutical companies, the Department will notify the Coroner of any advice it receives after writing to the companies and advise on potential next steps.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Wheatley', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Brendon Wheatley
PBAC Secretary (A/g)
Office of Health Technology Assessment
Technology Assessment and Access Division
pbac@health.gov.au
25 February 2025