



2 March 2020

## **NACCHO leads PBS listing of medication to improve eye health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**

The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) is proud to have led a successful submission to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) for an expansion to the listing of Prednefrin Forte on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). This item can now be prescribed on the PBS for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients as of 1 March 2020.

NACCHO worked with a range of experts and stakeholders to seek listing of Prednefrin Forte on the PBS for treatment of post-operative eye-inflammation. This listing will mean that there is a greater range and better affordability of anti-inflammatory eye drops for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Eye disease is more common in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people compared to other Australians; eye health outcomes are poorer and cataracts more prevalent. Prednefrin Forte (prednisolone and phenylephrine eye drops) is a medication used to treat eye inflammation and swelling that is often considered first-line therapy by ophthalmologists after cataract surgery. It has advantageous properties and pack size when compared to other similar medicines.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are overrepresented in rates of eye disease and vision problems. They are amongst the most common long-term health conditions reported by our communities and most of the vision loss associated with these issues is preventable,” said Dr Dawn Casey, Deputy CEO of NACCHO.

“This successful collaboration with experts and industry is important to NACCHO as access to the right medication and the best medical treatment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, is our top priority. In order to close the gap in health rates and experiences, more actions like this in the right direction must be made.”

Allergan Managing Director, Nathalie McNeil said, “It has been a pleasure for Allergan to collaborate with NACCHO on this PBAC submission. We are excited about Prednefrin Forte’s contribution towards improved health outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.”

Vision 2020 Australia CEO Judith Abbott said, “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people currently experience blindness and low vision at three times the rate of non-Indigenous Australians.

“As Strong eyes, strong communities: a five-year plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye health and vision highlights, improving access to timely, culturally sensitive and affordable eye health care is of vital importance. We welcome this change to current drug scheduling, which will enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access a broader and more affordable range of eye medications, when they are needed.”

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