

NSW Labor to abolish chemotherapy co-payment removing the financial burden from cancer patients

Posted by **Nsw Labor** on March 01, 2015

A Foley Labor Government will abolish the chemotherapy co-payment for all cancer patients in NSW public hospitals.

Labor will provide \$6.2 million to ensure that chemotherapy is free of charge to all cancer patients in NSW public hospitals – easing the financial burden experienced by patients and their families.

Patients undergoing chemotherapy in some NSW public hospitals currently pay a one-off co-payment for chemotherapy drugs injected or infused via drip.

Some cancer patients pay up to \$180 in co-payments for their initial chemotherapy treatment, and may even be charged more down the track if their treatment changes.

Quotes attributable to NSW Opposition Leader Luke Foley:

“A cancer diagnosis is hard enough without having to think about the cost of treatment. Labor will abolish this financial burden for patients and their families.

“In NSW, patients are paying a fee for essential chemotherapy drugs at a time when they can least afford it.

“Other states around Australia have managed to get this right and it’s time NSW followed suit.

“Nobody should be forced to choose between paying for potentially life-saving medicine and the other necessities of life.”

Quotes attributable to Shadow Minister for Health Walt Secord:

“Finding out your loved one have cancer is incredibly distressing. The last thing cancer patients need to worry about is how they are going to pay for chemotherapy.

“Labor will scrap the chemotherapy co-payment so patients can focus on recovery rather than day-to-day costs.”

Key Facts:

- The chemotherapy co-payment was introduced by the Liberal-National Government in 2012.
- This co-payment is not charged in other states because chemotherapy patients are admitted as in-patients and are thus reimbursed from the Australian Government.
- 51,000 people a year are expected to be diagnosed with cancer by 2021.
- The Cancer Council estimates the average lifetime out-of-pocket cost for a person with cancer and their family is \$47,200 – including \$38,300 in productivity costs, \$3,900 in non-health costs and \$5,000 for health care.
- Almost half of public cancer outpatients in NSW have household incomes below \$30,000 after tax.
- The co-payment is required for the first prescription of each chemotherapy drug. The first round of chemotherapy can involve four or five separate drugs, so it is common for patients to pay around \$180 for the first treatment.
- If the treatment program changes and new chemotherapy medicines are prescribed, patients must pay another co-pay - on top of any fees for other drugs, such as medications to relieve chemotherapy side effects like nausea.

Need to know more? What are the Government's or the Coalition's plans for health care? Do you need to know about current spending on health services?

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