

Media Release

The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business

Minister for Resources



Friday, 25 February 2022

POSSIBLE NEW LYMPHOMA TREATMENT A TARGETED ATTACK

There could soon be a new treatment option for lymphoma patients, with the Andrews Labor Government backing pre-clinical trials of a cancer-busting immunotherapy.

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Jaala Pulford today announced Victorian drug developers, Avipep, will begin testing their new antibody-based therapy at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in partnership with CSIRO.

Avipep is pioneering a promising new technique using small antibody fragments that target and destroy lymphoma cancer cells.

The small proteins, developed by Avipep, are hardwired to precisely attack tumours which are often resistant to treatment, while the immunotherapy method also minimises common toxic side effects for patients.

The new therapy offers fresh hope for relapsed lymphoma patients, as there are currently few treatments available for those who've had multiple recurrences of the disease.

Avipep's antibody treatment is also designed to be effective against a wide range of lymphoma cancers including Hodgkin's lymphomas, ALCL and CTCL lymphomas.

Around 1700 Victorians are diagnosed with lymphoma each year, with many losing their lives within five to ten years of their initial diagnosis.

A clinical study with cancer patients, including at the Epworth Hospital, is set to follow pre-clinical trials currently underway.

The study is backed by the *Victorian Medical Research Acceleration Fund* which supports early-stage research and fast-tracks innovative projects from research to real-world impact. A total of 69 projects have received funding through the fund to date, providing \$11.9 million to the Victorian health and medical research sector.

In the past year, the Labor Government has invested more than \$590 million in medical research. For more information visit djpr.vic.gov.au/medical-research.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Jaala Pulford

"Everyone knows someone who's been affected by cancer – we must take every opportunity to improve the treatment and outlook for these awful diseases."

"Victorian companies like Avipep are making great strides in developing new and amazing treatments that have the potential to change lives and save lives."

Quote attributable to Avipep Chief Scientist Dr Peter Hudson

"Avipep was delighted to be awarded the grant from the Government, which has greatly accelerated both our manufacturing process and the pre-clinical testing of this new and important antibody-drug therapy at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre."

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