

MEDIA RELEASE

12 May 2021

New genetic pathology tests are now within reach of all Australians

The announcement of Medicare funding for a number of potentially life-changing genetic pathology tests in the federal budget is an important advancement in the delivery of healthcare to all Australians.

Genetic pathology has become the most progressive pathology discipline. These emerging tests now play a vital role in augmenting traditional pathology results to guide diagnosis, therapy and the monitoring of conditions. The majority of these tests is performed in Australia by Australian Pathology's member practices and now, with Medicare funding, are within reach of all patients.

The decision to provide expanded Medicare funding for genetic tests was welcomed by Professor Graeme Suthers, Director of Sonic Genetics and a genetic pathologist and clinician with extensive experience in patient care. He explained that the value of incorporating genetic testing into the clinical care pathway is to provide patients with clearer treatment options and enable them to make informed decisions.

"The funding of these tests means that many more patients will have better and evidenced-based information about their condition. Under the care of their treating clinician they will now be able to make better-informed choices about their treatment."

He noted that there was an important emphasis in this budget announcement regarding genetic tests prior to and during pregnancy.

CEO of Australian Pathology, Ms Liesel Wett acknowledged the new Medicare rebates as an investment in the healthcare of Australians. Australian Pathology, the national peak body for private pathology in Australia, along with its members, is committed to the provision of high quality, affordable, safe and accessible pathology service to all Australians.

"These new genetic tests are the pathology tests of the future and they have a direct impact on the health of many Australians," she said.

"Additionally, our members, the laboratories that do these tests, are doing them here, in Australia. These are complex tests, that require high-level scientific expertise, and they are done here on our doorstep."

The addition of these genetic tests to the Medicare Benefits Schedule comes after significant collaboration between the pathology sector and the federal government.

Australian Pathology is the peak national body representing private pathology in Australia.

“The greatest benefit is to the patient who needs these tests. With Medicare rebates, they have peace of mind knowing that there is no out-of-pocket cost to them,” Ms Wett said.

Ms Wett thanked the federal government for recognising the significant impact these tests will have on everyday Australians.

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Available for interview:

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