

6 December 2016

Professor Robyn Ward  
Chair, Medical Services Advisory Committee  
Department of Health and Ageing  
MDP 851  
GPO Box 9848  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Professor Ward

**RE: Prosigna (PAM-50) Breast Cancer Prognostic Gene Signature Assay**

Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) is the peak national organisation for Australians personally affected by breast cancer. We support, inform, represent and connect people whose lives have been affected by breast cancer. BCNA represents more than 120,000 individual members and 300 Member Groups from across Australia.

BCNA is pleased to support the application to the Medical Services Advisory Committee for the Prosigna Breast Cancer Prognostic Gene Signature Assay. This test provides women diagnosed with certain types of breast cancer with an individual risk of recurrence (ROR) score that estimates the risk of her breast cancer recurring. Understanding the risk of recurrence enables women and their clinicians to make better informed decisions about treatment, particularly the potential benefits or otherwise of chemotherapy.

Chemotherapy is a highly toxic treatment, with both short-term and long-term side effects, and being able to safely avoid it is obviously of great interest to patients. There are also cost savings for Government in not paying for chemotherapy drugs that may have little or no benefit to individual women, and in reduced treatment and hospital admissions for women who suffer toxic side effects. For women for whom the ROR score indicates a benefit for chemotherapy, there is comfort in knowing that chemotherapy is likely to reduce the risk of their breast cancer recurring.

*I was told that, due to its aggressiveness, I would need chemo ... 4 rounds over 3 months ... before radiation and hormone therapies could start. But then I was offered the opportunity to have the Prosigna test. ... It came back today as a "No". So I got to dodge the chemo bullet. ... It's not cheap, but well worth it if it comes back in your favour. – San-Dee, BCNA online network*

The cost for Prosigna testing in Australia is currently around \$3,000. This is well beyond the reach of many women. BCNA believes all women who can benefit from tests and treatments should have equal access to them, and that the inclusion of Prosigna on the MBS would help to make this test available to women who could benefit from it.

Yours sincerely



Kathy Wells  
Head of Policy, Research and Advocacy