



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

Mr A Simon Harvey
President - Epilepsy Society of Australia
Children's Neuroscience Centre
Royal Children's Hospital
Flemington Road
PARKVILLE VIC 3052

Dear Mr Harvey

MSAC Application 1118– Vagus Nerve Stimulation (VNS) Therapy

I am writing to advise you of the outcome of your application to the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC) seeking public funding for Vagus Nerve Stimulation (VNS) Therapy.

You will have received a draft version of the MSAC's assessment report. The finalised report was considered by the MSAC at its meeting on 6 June 2008.

On 28 August 2008, the Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Nicola Roxon MP, noted the following MSAC advice:

The MSAC has considered the safety, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness for vagus nerve stimulation in addition to anti-epileptic medication for patients with medically refractory epilepsy. It was compared with continued or modified anti-epileptic drug therapy for all patients, and for children it was also compared with or without a ketogenic diet.

MSAC finds the procedure is reasonably safe in the context of the condition being treated.

MSAC finds there is insufficient evidence of effectiveness and net benefit of vagal nerve stimulation therapy for patients with medically refractory epilepsy.

Formal economic analysis was not conducted in view of the uncertainty of net clinical benefit.

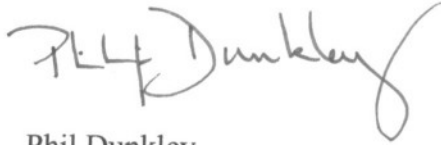
MSAC recommends that public funding arrangements for vagus nerve stimulation for epilepsy remain unchanged.

While I recognise that you may be disappointed with the outcome of this assessment, I would like to emphasise that the conclusions have been reached based on current available evidence. The option remains for you to reapply to the MSAC for re-evaluation of the technology if more conclusive evidence becomes available. You may also wish to take up the opportunity for a 'de-briefing' meeting with the Secretariat. If you wish to arrange a 'de-briefing' meeting please email the MSAC secretariat on MSAC.SECRETARIAT@health.gov.au.

The MSAC assessment report is being printed and a copy will be sent to you when it becomes available. The report will also be available on the Internet at www.msac.gov.au.

Please contact me either by email at phil.dunkley@health.gov.au or on 02 6289 5042 if you have any queries about this letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil Dunkley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Phil Dunkley
Senior Project Manager
MSAC Projects
Health Technology and Medical Services Group
Medical Benefits Division
17 September 2008