Dominic Perrottet
Treasurer

Brad Hazzard
Minister for Health and Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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ALMOST $50 MILLION BOOST FOR LIFESAVING GENE THERAPY

Patients with blood cancers and some rare genetic diseases will benefit from a $49.6 million funding boost for innovative new cell and gene therapies in the 2020-21 NSW Budget.

Treasurer Dominic Perrottet said the funding will provide faster and greater access to cutting edge and lifesaving treatments, including CAR T-cell therapy.

“This funding offers real hope to the families of children suffering from rare and often fatal diseases by opening the door to new, innovative therapies,” Mr Perrottet said.

“This is an exciting time in medicine. There is a wave of cell and gene therapies now available for rare, previously untreatable, often fatal conditions.”

Minister for Health Brad Hazzard said NSW has played a leading role in global research efforts in the development of novel cell and gene therapies to treat rare, fatal conditions.

“The people of NSW no longer need to leave their State to access these world-class innovations, thanks to the ingenuity and dedication of our State’s leading clinical experts,” Mr Hazzard said.

“This investment will help ensure NSW children with these rare and life-threatening conditions are given every chance possible at a longer, happier and healthier life.”

The funding will support access to:

- CAR T-cell therapy which modifies a person’s own immune cells to attack their cancer and offers hope for remission and long-term survival for:
    - children and young adults with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia (ALL) CAR T-cell therapy.
    - adults with diffuse large B-cell Lymphoma.
- Gene therapy for children with the genetic blinding eye disease, Retinitis Pigmentosa. This potentially sight-saving therapy is expected to be available in Australia by the end of 2020.
- Monoclonal antibody therapy for neuroblastoma. This therapy vastly improves the outcomes for children with this type of cancer.
- Gene-based therapies for spinal muscular atrophy, a fatal condition with few treatment options until very recently. NSW has one of the highest volume centres globally for gene therapy treatment of this condition.

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