



## IMPROVING EARLY DIAGNOSIS OF LUNG DISEASE IN PRIMARY CARE

The CHEST intervention is designed to improve the early recognition of lung disease in Australians in primary care

### WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Almost 1 in 3 Australians have some form of lung disease<sup>1</sup>. There is a **strong stigma** surrounding lung disease that is a major barrier to diagnosis and accessing healthcare<sup>2</sup>. At least 40% of those living with lung diseases such as lung cancer or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) feel stigma from the view that lung diseases are self-inflicted and smoking related<sup>2</sup>.

Lung cancer is the most common cancer worldwide and the most common cause of cancer deaths<sup>3</sup>. Last year, there were nearly 10,000 estimated deaths due to lung cancer. While 1 in 7 Australians suffer COPD which is the most common cause of potentially preventable hospitalisations<sup>2</sup>.

Early recognition of these conditions is critical for improving the health and management of Australians living with lung disease. A key aspect of early recognition is reducing the time it takes patients with symptoms of lung disease to present to their GP.

### POLICY RECOMMENDATION

In the absence of a national screening program for lung cancer, CHEST is a low-cost healthcare option that can improve the early diagnosis and management of serious lung diseases such as COPD and lung cancer, in primary care.

Important benefits of CHEST include **reducing the stigma** and guilt felt by smokers, increasing patients understanding and the personal relevance of their symptoms to increase the likelihood of presenting to their GP when symptoms start.

We believe CHEST should be incorporated into a lung health check delivered by a practice nurse in primary care. This alternative approach to screening would support the early diagnosis of people at moderate to high risk of lung cancer and COPD.

Overall, CHEST would improve the health of long-term smokers which are well-established 'hard-to-reach group' representing over 2.6 million Australians<sup>4</sup>.

## KEY MESSAGES



More than **12,000** new lung cancer diagnoses in Australia each year



CHEST Australia **largest trial world-wide** to test a tailored behavioural approach to reduce patient delay in lung cancer diagnosis



CHEST can significantly **increase patients presenting** to GPs for symptoms potentially related to lung cancer



CHEST can **improve the respiratory health** of Australians at higher risk of lung cancer



The incremental cost-effectiveness ratio of CHEST is **\$1289** per additional respiratory consultation.

### References

1. AIHW, 2016, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/australias-health-2016/contents/ill-health>
2. Lung Foundation. Australia. What is lung disease?. <https://lungfoundation.com.au/patients-carers/lung-health/what-is-lung-disease/>
3. International Agency for Research on Cancer. Lung cancer estimated incidence, mortality and prevalence worldwide 2012: International Agency for Research on Cancer, 2018.
4. Department of Health. Smoking prevalence rates. Canberra: Australian Government, Department of Health, 2018.

## QUESTIONS?

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