

**Speech to health group supporters and MPs by BCAC deputy chair Emma Crowley  
7 May 2019, outside Parliament.**

**This speech followed a march to Parliament to present petitions from health groups calling for proper medicines funding across a range of diseases.**

Emma's petition asks for the House of Representatives to urge the Minister of Health to provide sufficient funding to Pharmac to subsidise all of the drugs listed in the European ESMO guidelines for the treatment of advanced breast cancer.

Speech: "Each year over 600 New Zealanders die from advanced breast cancer. I started this petition because women with advanced breast cancer deserve the medicines they need to extend their lives and have better quality of life. Their families need them and for many these drugs can mean the difference between a child remembering their mother or not.

"NZ has very few funded drugs available to treat this disease, resulting in shorter lives of poorer quality than in countries where effective medicines are funded. Our median survival time is 16 months compared to 3-5 years elsewhere.

"That's why we are here today, with our friends from the other health groups and supporters to call on our elected representatives for proper funding of medicines for a number of serious diseases.

"There is so much suffering that our politicians and Pharmac don't (or won't) see and these medicines would make a huge difference to so many people's lives and the lives of their families.

"The medicines we are seeking are funded in most comparable countries around the world and are considered *the* standard of care. They are based on expert evidence and are proven medicines.

"Delay in funding these medicines is killing women, and causing personal and financial stress and lasting harm to their families and communities.

"Due to our medicines funding in NZ being so poor, many people die needlessly.

"Our medicines budget must be increased substantially to bring it into line with other OECD countries: NZ spends only \$199 per person per year on medicines, compared to the 2016 OECD average of \$951.

"We request that our elected representatives urge the Minister of Health to provide sufficient funding to Pharmac to subsidise all of the drugs listed in the European ESMO guidelines for the treatment of advanced breast cancer, and those requested by our sister and brother groups here today."