



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

An Oifig Náisiúnta don Chuimsiú  
Sóisialta  
Rannóg Cúram Príomhúil  
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse  
Sláinte  
Lána an Mhuilinn  
Baile Phámar  
Baile Átha Cliath 20

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20<sup>th</sup> December, 2017

Deputy Billy Kelleher, TD  
Dáil Éireann  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 53871/17**

\* To ask the Minister for Health the details of the expansion of other paraphernalia such as foil within the pharmacy needle exchange programme to allow persons the option of smoking rather than injecting.

Dear Deputy Kelleher,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to your above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position:

The provision of foil through the Pharmacy Needle Exchange programme began on a demand led basis at the end of Q3 2017. This demand was ascertained by service user requesting pharmacies for foil. Currently foil is available from pharmacy service in CHO 4 and CHO 5. In tandem with the increased availability of foil, add on accredited training has been provided to community pharmacist participating in the delivery of this service. Foil provision will also allow people to smoke heroin and may prevent People Who Use Drugs from moving to injecting. It also has the additional potential benefit of providing those who inject heroin with the choice of smoking rather than injecting. It has been shown that foil provision may have the potential for a decrease in blood borne viruses; increased contact and engagement with pharmacists to discuss their healthcare needs; and direct to treatment and support services, as appropriate; reduced systemic infections and soft tissue and venal damage; lower risk of overdose; and reduced litter.

As with any new initiative introduced in the Addiction Service this is being monitored by requesting pharmacist participating to complete the recording sheet with the details of the quantity provided, demographic details including gender and age,. Furthermore there will be an evaluation of the uptake and benefit of the provision of foil to individuals attending the Community Pharmacy Needle Exchange. The monitoring and evaluation of the initiative will inform any further expansion and development in the community.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joseph Doyle', written in a cursive style.

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Joseph Doyle  
National Planning Specialist