



Mr Brendan Howlin, T.D.
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

1st October, 2019

PQ: 39292/19

To ask the Minister for Health if the reimbursement dataset will cover only current HSE funded users of FreeStyle Libre or if the health technology assessment review will simply compare total blood glucose strip usage spend year on year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Brendan Howlin

Dear Deputy Howlin,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 39292/19), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

In line with the Health Technology Assessment Group (HTAG) Advice Note: 2017/001, it was agreed that after twelve months, the situation including historical reimbursement data would be reviewed to inform next steps. The Primary Care Eligibility & Reimbursement Service (PCERS) now has 12 months data available and have collated it in recent months.

The reimbursement cost of FreeStyle Libre sensors for the 12 month period from 1st April 2018 was in the region of €1.8 million. The number of persons granted access under General Medical Services (GMS) and Community Drug Schemes during this time was 2,798.

The HSE must be satisfied that the expected 'off-set' reductions in glucose monitoring ancillaries materialise.

It was considered that the availability of clinical data in the Irish setting would also be useful to inform next steps as that has a bearing on overall cost effectiveness.

In recent months the PCERS has taken the following steps to gather the relevant data for review by the HTAG.

1. Liaison with the National Clinical Programme for Diabetes. Some (unpublished) material has been provided by the Clinical Programme in recent weeks and has been shared with HTAG.

2. Collated the reimbursement data on strip usage for persons approved for Freestyle. Reductions in strip usage can be accurately measured through the reimbursement records held in PCERS on a patient specific basis, as notified to the HSE through individual pharmacy claims on a monthly basis.
3. Collated the reasons for exceptional approvals
4. Provided the quantitative data to HTAG for their review. It will take some weeks for this to be conducted.
5. Provided to HTAG the Diabetes Ireland Survey on the use of this product. The HTA process envisaged in the coming months does allow for patient experience and societal aspects of benefit to be considered.

The HSE PCERS has also in recent days written to a number of patients asking for their assistance to understand why they appear to continue to use two systems of glucose monitoring i.e strips and sensors. Initial review indicates that some persons with diabetes continue to access comparable (if not more) levels of ancillaries in their pharmacy. As it was anticipated that off-set efficiencies would materialise to improve affordability, this is a very important aspect in our consideration whether further extensions are possible within the current financial resources.”

Additional Information

HTAG advice:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/htag/publications/htag-advice-note-freestyle-libre.pdf>

Yours sincerely,



Kieran Healy
Primary Care Eligibility & Reimbursement Service