



29th October 2019

Deputy John Curran, TD
Dáil Eireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2.

PQ: 42042/19

To ask the Minister for Health the average length of time for which a person remains on a methadone programme; the average cost per annum in maintaining a person on a programme; the number of locations from which methadone programmes are operated; the number of persons provided for on average at these locations; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Curran,

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 most recent available data for length of time in Methadone treatment is as of 31st of December 2018. From this data the average length of time for 10,333 patients receiving Methadone treatment (including prisons) is 8.7 years. For the Deputy's information, there is international research evidence that increased length of time in OST is associated with improved treatment outcomes (including reduced use of other opioids and reduced criminal activity) and short-term methadone maintenance treatment is associated with poorer outcomes (Ward J, Mattick RP and Hall W (1998)).

Figures on the cost of methadone treatment via a clinic setting are not readily available as currently this cost is absorbed within the overall Addiction services area budget. However the full year cost in 2018 for Methadone Prescribing GMS Doctors and Pharmacies who dispense Methadone under the methadone programme is calculated as:

Average cost per annum for pharmacy services are €1,625.83 per patient
Average cost for GP services are € €1,767.48 per patient.

As of the end of September 2019 9,746 patients receiving Methadone Treatment (excluding prisons) which includes 4,267 patients being treated by 367 GPs in the community and 5,479 patients in 87 HSE Clinics. Methadone was dispensed by 724 pharmacies catering for 6,938 patients.

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.

Joseph Doyle
National Planning Specialist