



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Phríomhoifigigh Airgeadais
Feidhmeannacht na
Seirbhíse Sláinte
Seomra 125, Ospidéal
Dr. Steevens
BÁC 8

Office of the Chief Financial Officer
Health Service Executive
Room 125, Dr Steevens
Hospital
Dublin 8

9th October 2019

Deputy Louise O'Reilly TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Re PQ 39030 19: *To ask the Minister for Health the amount spent by the HSE on taxis to date in 2019, in tabular form*

Dear Deputy O'Reilly,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. Your PQ above has been referred to me for response.

HSE vehicles and their staff are prioritised for front line, emergency work and therefore a much more effective service is provided for patients or clients who are not acutely ill through the use of taxis. Taxi services are also used for transport of renal dialysis patients and at times for the transfer of patient charts/files between hospitals. The use of taxis for patient transport represents a more cost effective solution when compared to investment in a fleet of HSE owned vehicles for this purpose. Additional costs relating to this would include the provision of 24/7 staffing, maintenance, fuel, insurance and tax. The use of taxis also allows the HSE flexibility in the face of variable demand.

As outlined in the Health Act, 2004 the objective of the Executive is to use the resources available to it in the most beneficial, effective and efficient manner to improve, promote and protect the health and welfare of the public. In the last number of years, in accordance with this strategic objective, the HSE has centralised and reconfigured services nationally to create centres of excellence for the provision of critical services. Examples include the centralizing of Renal Patients nationally to Beaumont Hospital, the development of Dialysis Services in Mid-West and provision of Radiation Oncology services in Dublin, Cork and Galway. Consequently, transport costs are showing an increase year on year particularly in the areas affected by the changes described above.

The total amount paid by the HSE for taxi services for the period January to August 2019 is **€21.6m**, this is the most recent data available. The data was sourced from the HSE Regional Finance general ledger systems and is for HSE Statutory services only. Please note that the 2019 data is draft only and is subject to change within the year end audit process.

In view of the fact that there are still currently numerous ledger systems in operation in the HSE some differences in coding may arise. The figures collated may therefore include some other patient transport costs such as minibus and local transport initiatives. It is not possible to identify the level of costs involved as an

extensive exercise would be required to perform such an analysis for which there are no resources at this time.

The shortcomings in the HSE legacy financial systems are well acknowledged and their replacement by a single standard financial system for the Health Sector is at the core of the Finance Reform programme initiated by the Department of Health.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me at sarah.anderson1@hse.ie or tel: 045 882559.

Yours sincerely



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