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Primary Care Reimbursement Service
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Stephen Donnelly, T.D.
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

3 April 2020

PQ 3402/20

To ask the Minister for Health the cost in 2019 of the 10% increase across all GP visit card weekly income thresholds; the full year cost of same; and the number of additional GP visit cards issued in 2019 as a result of this change.

Dear Deputy Donnelly,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 3402/20), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The GP Visit Card threshold increase came into effect on 1st April 2019. Carers, those under 6 years and those 70 years and over were not affected by the threshold increase as these have universal entitlement to GP Visit Card eligibility. The GP capitation fee for all other client cohorts depends on the age and sex of the person with eligibility. On average, there are 1.7 people associated with each application for eligibility. Additional costs that are associated with out-of-hours service provision, GP practice support payments, etc. must be factored-in to determine the overall cost. An average is therefore applied to the figures shown below, which also take into account fee increases under the GP Agreement, which came into effect on 1st July 2019.

Number of GP Visit Cards issued in 2019, arising from the increase of the financial threshold	4,667
Cost of additional GP Visit Card eligibility granted in 2019	€ 392,729
Full Year Cost	€ 939,133

It is emphasised that amounts shown do not include the cost associated with GP Visit Card eligibility retained by people with pre-existing eligibility who, following an eligibility review, may otherwise have lost eligibility or, alternatively had their status modified from Medical Card eligibility to GP Visit Card eligibility and fall within the 10% threshold change range.

Full year costs in respect of the additional GP Visit Card eligibility granted in 2019 are predicated on the person(s) with eligibility retaining their eligibility status for a full year.

It should also be noted that the income threshold is used for means testing but those whose means assessment places them above the financial threshold may still be granted eligibility if, as a result of medical or social circumstances, they are adjudged to experience undue hardship, in which case eligibility may be granted on a discretionary basis. The basic rates weekly income limits are contained in the Medical Card and GP Visit Card: National Assessment Guidelines, which is on the website.

Yours sincerely,

Kieran Healy
Primary Care Eligibility & Reimbursement Service