



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

12<sup>th</sup> October, 2020

PQ: 27823/20

**To ask the Minister for Health the reason carer's allowance is taken into account as income in assessing the means for medical card applicants over 70 years of age; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Seán Canney**

Dear Deputy Canney,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 27823/20), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Following a Government decision in 2008 to withdraw automatic entitlement to a medical card for persons aged 70 and over, the Medical/GP Visit Cards guidelines for persons aged over 70 years old were amended. From the implementation of the new gross scheme for persons aged over 70 years old Carers Allowance was introduced as an assessable income within the means assessment. The person's Aged 70 Years and Older Medical Card/GP Visit Card scheme assesses Medical Card/GP Visit Card eligibility based on an applicant(s) (and, if applies, his/her dependants) gross household income only. If a person aged 70 or older is assessed ineligible under this scheme, they may also have their Medical Card eligibility assessed under the general scheme of assessment.

This scheme is based on an assessment of net income less assessable outgoing expenses. The Medical Card/GP Visit Card qualifying financial thresholds are however of a lower range on the General scheme compared with the higher range on the Persons Aged 70 and older scheme. Carers allowance is not assessed on a net application. There have been no further changes to the assessable income of the over 70 gross scheme since the implementation date in 2008.

Suzanne Doyle  
Primary Care Eligibility & Reimbursement Service

**The Health Service Executive operates the General Medical Services Scheme, which includes Medical Cards and GP Visit Cards, under the Health Act 1970, as amended. It has established a dedicated contact service for members of the Oireachtas specifically for queries relating to the status of Medical Cards and GP Visit Cards applications, which the Deputy / Senator may wish to use for an earlier response. Tel: 01-8647180 / email: [Oireachtas.pcrs@hse.ie](mailto:Oireachtas.pcrs@hse.ie)**