



Eamon O'Cuiv, T.D.  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

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

PQ: 28568/20

**To ask the Minister for Health the steps he will take to ensure greater use in prescribing generic and biosimilar medicines; the estimated extra saving envisaged next year by the increased use; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Eamon Ó Cuiv**

Dear Deputy O'Cuiv,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 28568/20), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

In 2010, the generic penetration rate of generic medicines was less than 40% in the off-patent market. Figures up to year end 2019, show that the current generic penetration rate is 73% of volume in the off-patent market.

A substantial programme of Biosimilar reform is ongoing supported by Clinical Leadership. In early 2019, biosimilar usage was 1.42% which increased to 16.68% by December 2019. Since the publication of the Best Value Biologic (BVB) recommendations in May 2019, there has been a significant increase in the prescribing of the BVB medicines. In July 2020, 47% of patients in receipt of adalimumab 40 mg pre-filled pen or syringe, and 50% of patients in receipt of etanercept 25/50 mg pre-filled pen or syringe were prescribed a BVB medicine. Over 8,700 patients have been initiated on, or switched to a BVB medicine since June 2019. Communication by the HSE Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to Hospital Group CEOs in March 2020, sets a target of a minimum of 80% of patients to be switched to a BVB medicine from branded adalimumab or etanercept by the end of 2020.

NSP 2020 budget includes a target of €50m in biosimilar savings for 2020.

There would be additional substantial savings in the Hospitals through biosimilar usage. Many of the biosimilars approved for reimbursement have been approved with commercially confidential price discounts in place. Therefore, resulting efficiencies would be greater than those calculated using list prices. The above figures only encompass those efficiencies delivered through Primary Care Reimbursement Service.

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)**