



Fergus O'Dowd T.D.
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

18th September, 2020

PQ: 22493/20

To ask the Minister for Health the reason for the withdrawal of the widely used ozempic weight control medication from the drugs payment scheme; if the decision can be overturned, and if not, the alternatives for persons that cannot afford the monthly cost and are not applicable for medical cards; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Fergus O'Dowd

Dear Deputy O'Dowd,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 22493/20), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Semaglutide marketed as Ozempic® was approved by the HSE for addition to the Reimbursement List for the treatment of Diabetes. Diabetes is one of the Long Term Illness conditions for which eligible LTI persons can access their medicines to treat their Diabetes free of charge.

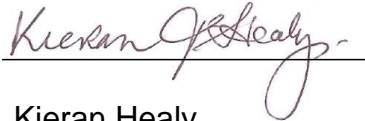
Since then, the Corporate Pharmaceutical Unit of the HSE has received an application for addition to the Reimbursement List for Liraglutide (Saxenda®), indicated as an adjunct to a reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity for weight management in adult patients. Saxenda® is currently being assessed under the national processes for pricing and reimbursement and therefore is not available under any of the Community Drugs Schemes including Discretionary Hardship Arrangements until that process is completed with a positive decision by the HSE.

As it was believed that some patients were accessing dosage levels of both Liraglutide (Victoza®) and Semaglutide (Ozempic®) for the expanded indication rather than the HSE approved indication of Diabetes, controls were

placed on claiming processes to ensure that only the HSE approved indication was reimbursed.

All persons with Diabetes are eligible for the Long Term Illness Scheme. Therefore there is no need for it to be available on the Drugs Payment Scheme other than to circumvent the national pricing and reimbursement processes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Kieran Healy', written over a horizontal line.

Kieran Healy
Primary Care Eligibility & Reimbursement Service