



Sean Fleming, T.D.
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

5th May, 2021

PQ: 18402/21

To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide details of the document in which it has been established that a blood test should not have been charged by the local general practitioner (details supplied); the number of refunds that have been issued to persons that have made a complaint in relation to the matter; the value of these repayments; the number of deductions from regular payments that have been made to general practitioners; the value of same in 2019, 2020 and to date in 2021; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - Sean Fleming

and that the HSE primary care reimbursement service will review any action and recommendations made by the local health manager to make a refund to the complainant or make a corresponding deduction from the regular payments to the general practitioner in question

Dear Deputy Fleming,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 18402/21), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Under the terms of the current GMS contract, GPs are required to provide eligible patients with "all proper and necessary treatment of a kind usually undertaken by a general practitioner and not requiring special skill or experience of a degree or kind which general practitioners cannot reasonably be expected to possess". Routine blood tests, which are deemed clinically necessary by the patient's GP are comprehended by this scope of service. It is of course a matter for the treating GP to determine in the case of each individual patient what is proper and necessary care. In circumstances where a GP, in the exercise of his/her clinical judgement, determines that a particular treatment or service requested by a patient is not clinically necessary but the patient still wishes to receive same, it is at the GPs discretion as to whether he/she imposes a charge for providing the service/treatment in question. An example of this might be an asymptomatic patient about whom the GP does not have any clinical concerns requesting a general health screening. Consultation fees charged by GPs outside the terms of the GMS contracts are a matter of private contract between the clinicians and their patients. The HSE does not have any role in relation to the regulation of such fees.

The role of the Primary Care team, within each CHO, is to investigate, in the first instance, the validity of any claim that a person with eligibility makes regarding charges inappropriately levied by their GP of choice for blood tests undertaken at the GP's practice - 'as part of proper and necessary treatment of a kind usually undertaken by a general practitioner and not requiring special skill or experience of a degree or kind which general practitioners cannot reasonably be expected to possess'

The role of the PCRS is to act appropriately on the basis of the recommendations made by the local health manager to:

- make a refund to the complainant
- make a corresponding deduction from the regular payments to the GP in question.

If a refund is due the PCRS must be instructed by the CHO following their investigation.

Please find below the requested information:

1) the number of refunds that have been issued to persons that have made a complaint in relation to the matter;

From 2017 a total of 21 refunds have been issued to 20 unique clients.

2) the value of these repayments;

Overall value of these refunds was €2,065.

3) the number of deductions from regular payments that have been made to general practitioners;

From 2017 a total of 21 deductions have been made from GPs regular payments.

4) the value of same in 2019, 2020 and to date in 2021;

Year	No. of refunds	No. of unique patients	Overall value of refunds	No. of deductions from GPs
2019	10	10	€1,010	10
2020	2	2	€130	2
2021	3	2	€195	3

The PCRS does not collate the number of complaints received in the quoted timeframe. The PCRS receive details from CHO once investigation is completed.

Yours sincerely,



Suzanne Doyle
Primary Care Eligibility & Reimbursement Service