



15th December 2021

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 59258/21 - To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the difficulty some elderly medical card holders are having receiving chiropodist care due to the additional cost on top of their medical card that they have to pay (details supplied); and if the scheme will be reviewed.

- Aengus Ó Snodaigh

Dear Deputy Ó Snodaigh,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 59258/21) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Chiropodists/podiatrists assess, diagnose and treat conditions and abnormalities of the foot and lower limb. Podiatry services can significantly improve peoples' quality of life by alleviating painful symptoms, and promoting and maintaining mobility. At present in Ireland, if a person has a foot problem they can:

- Attend their GP for a foot assessment and be referred to a HSE Podiatrist (free of charge no matter what their age or General Medical Services (GMS) status).
- Attend and pay for the services of a private podiatrist.

In County Dublin and County Wicklow primarily, there has been a long standing Chiropody Card Scheme, where qualified podiatrists can apply to be on a register as a HSE approved chiropodist/podiatrist. Once approved, patients can request to attend the private podiatrist clinic or request a domiciliary visit from a private podiatrist. Each person under this scheme, Medical Card or long term illness number (in certain areas), can avail of 3-6 treatments per year, but it is not free. The HSE pays the private podiatrist €33.41 for a domiciliary visit and €22.88 for clinical visit. The patients then top up the payment themselves and the fee is determined by the podiatrist.

The HSE has been working on developing a national standardised podiatry service across the country. This is being developed with the recruitment of podiatrist positions in the community health networks as well as specialist podiatrists to provide care to the persons diagnosed with diabetes. The HSE are also aware of and committed to developing appropriate governance structures throughout the country within the podiatry service, to meet the needs of the population.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seán McArt'.

Seán McArt

General Manager Primary Care
National Community Operations