



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Phríomhoifigigh Airgeadais
Feidhmeannacht na
Seirbhíse Sláinte
Seomra 125, Ospidéal
Dr. Steevens
BÁC 8

Office of the Chief Financial Officer
Health Service Executive
Room 125, Dr Steevens
Hospital
Dublin 8

3rd March 2021

Deputy Emer Higgins TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Re PQ 8978 21: *To ask the Minister for Health the number of HSE bills for cancer patients outsourced to debt collectors in 2019 and 2020; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

Dear Deputy Higgins,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. Your PQ above has been referred to me for response.

I regret to inform you that the information you have requested is not centrally collated. Debt collection continues to be managed at a local level.

The shortcomings in the HSE legacy financial systems are well acknowledged and their replacement by a single standard financial system for the Health Sector is at the core of the Finance Reform programme initiated by the Department of Health.

Patients who attend at public hospitals are, depending on their eligibility, and subject to certain exemptions, liable to statutory charges. These are levied under the provisions of the 1970 Health Act. The charges are €100 for an Emergency Department attendance and €80 for an overnight stay, the latter charge is capped at €800 in any 12 month period. The HSE has a statutory obligation to levy and collect these charges and Hospitals have the discretion to operate payment plans where appropriate.

Further information on Hospital Charges is available on the HSE website at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/acute-hospitals-division/patient-care/hospital-charges>

HSE policy and procedures for debt collection are covered by NFR 25(National Financial Regulations) which is available to view on the HSE website on the link below:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/financial%20regulations/nfr25.pdf>

Hospitals are required, under NFR 25, to refer an unpaid debt to a collection agency after a period of time from date of billing. It is therefore possible that the patient is still undergoing treatment when this referral takes place.

If any patient has difficulty paying a hospital bill the regulations allow for the hospital and the patient to agree an installment arrangement. We would advise they contact their hospital directly to discuss this on a one to one basis.

The HSE seeks to maximise the recovery of income in a socially responsible, ethical, efficient and cost effective way. It should be noted that the collection of monies owed is a continuous, daily and large scale process.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me at sarah.anderson1@hse.ie or tel: 087 9423319.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Anderson
General Manager Corporate Finance
National Finance Division, HSE
Email: sarah.anderson1@hse.ie
Tel: 087 9423319