



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

**Oifig an Cheannaire Oibríochtaí,**  
Na Seirbhísí Míchumais/An Rannán Cúram Sóisialta,  
31-33 Sráid Chaitríona, Luimneach.

**Office of the Head of Operations,**  
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24<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Deputy Paul Donnelly  
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Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.  
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Dear Deputy Donnelly,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following parliamentary question, which was submitted to this department for response.

**PQ 12573/21**

*To ask the Minister for Health if consideration has been given to providing hocoma lokomat treatment for disabled persons and long-term wheelchair users on social welfare who hold a medical card.*

**HSE Response**

The HSE provides assistive devices to people with disabilities to enable them to maintain their health, optimise functional ability and to facilitate care in their primary care setting. In addition, access to rehabilitative equipment is also provided, where appropriate. The Lokomat Walking Machine, for example, is used to provide intensive locomotion therapy for the treatment of children with cerebral palsy or other neurological disorders such as stroke, spinal cord injury and traumatic brain injury. The Physiotherapy Department in the National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH) also provides a Lokomat service to those clients under the direct care of the NRH and its Consultants and who have been identified as having the potential to benefit from Lokomat use as part of their therapy programme.

However, there are significant costs associated with acquiring and running a Lokomat Walking Machine. In addition to the cost of the machine itself, a high level of training and dedicated Physiotherapy support is required to maintain and use the equipment appropriately and ensure that functional goals are reached. The Lokomat is designed for patients with Acquired Neurological Injury and as yet, there is no outcome measure to provide evidence that robotic therapy is the appropriate treatment for other conditions or disabilities.

Yours sincerely,

**Dr. Cathal Morgan,**  
Head of Operations - Disability Services,  
Community Operations