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23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021

Deputy John Lahart  
Dáil Éireann  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

*PQ 13212/21: To ask the Minister for Health the details of the specific arrangements in place at public hospitals to ensure flexible charging systems for families and friends of patients that are frequent visitors as directed to the HSE by his Department since 2018, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

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Dear Deputy Lahart,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which the Minister for Health has referred to the Health Service Executive for direct response.

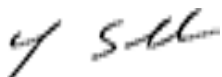
Hospitals introduced car parking charges over the past decade to cover such services' costs without impacting the hospitals' budget for patient services. As demand for car parking at hospitals increases, so too does the associated cost of providing these services, such as the initial capital cost of purchasing or renting parking areas, the cost of developing extra parking spaces, the need to provide and upgrade security systems, provide staffing and general maintenance of the car parks.

In March 2018, the then Minister for Health, Simon Harris, requested the HSE to review hospital car parking charges as a foundation for establishing clear national guidance and principles for hospitals in this regard. The review, which was completed in December 2018, found that nine hospitals provided free parking and, of the 34 Hospitals that have fee paying car parks, 32 hospitals had some form of exemptions/allowances already in place. These ranged from flexible day pass/multi-trip entry pass for regular hospital attenders to specific concessions based on the type of inpatient. I attach examples of the exemptions that were in place at the time of the Car Parking review in 2018.

The Programme for Government commits to introducing a cap on the maximum daily charge for patients and visitors at all public hospitals, where possible and to introduce flexible passes in all public hospitals for patients and their families. The Department of Health and the HSE are engaging on this issue in order to achieve this new Programme for Government commitment.

I trust the above information is of assistance to you, however, should you require any further details please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Y Goff', written over a horizontal line.

**Yvonne Goff**  
**National Director**  
**Acute Strategy & Planning**

### **Examples of Exemptions in place (as identified by the Hospital Car Parking Review in 2018)**

- Examples of the types of flexible day pass/multi trip entry pass include:
  - *South Tipperary Hospital* - €10 for multi two day pass; €20 for five day consecutive multi-trip pass, €35 for fifteen consecutive day multi trip pass
  - *Waterford University Hospital* – Multi trip 2 day pass - €10; 5 consecutive day multi trip pass - €20; 15 consecutive day multi trip pass - €35
  - *Tallaght Hospital* - Flexible day pass/multiple entries & exits in one day - €12.50; Entry pass six times within a three month period - €25
  - *Wexford General Hospital* - 2 day pass - €10; 5 day pass - €20 and 15 day pass - €35
  
- Examples of the types of concessions provided:
  - Free parking for disabled parking permits (Cappagh, Louth County Hospital, Monaghan GH)
  - €10 weekly charge for parents of paediatric inpatients (Cappagh)
  - €20 weekly charge for relatives of long term rehab patients (Cappagh)
  - Concessions for long terms stay patients (Our Ladys Navan, Monaghan GH, OLH Drogheda, Cork UH)
  - Free parking to parents of babies in Neonatal Unit (Coombe)
  - Day rate of €7.50 to persons accompanying women in Delivery Suite (Coombe)
  - Concessions for relatives of End of Life patients and certain Paediatric cases (MRH Portlaoise)
  - €1 flat rate all day fee for Oncology Patients (MRH Tullamore)
  - €5 for 24 hours or €30 for a week for End of Life Oncology, 14 days plus admissions and retained or admitted unexpectedly (St James)
  - Cancer, Renal and long stay patients (Cavan GH)
  - Cancer Patients and patients on limited means (Connolly Hospital, South Infirmary Cork)
  - Cancer and NICU (OLH Drogheda)
  - Families of Neonatal and Intensive care patients (Rotunda)
  - Dialysis patients (Cork UH)
  - €5 per day for chemotherapy or €5 per week for radiotherapy (Cork UH)
  - Free parking for palliative, oncology and dialysis patients (Kerry UH)
  - Families of long stay patients – reduced weekly fee of €20 (Kerry UH)
  - Free parking for family members of ICU patient, Acute Coronary Care Unit, in ED over 24 hours with family staying, those imminently dying or have died and those in the mortuary. (UH Limerick)
  - Concession rates for parents of babies in Neonatal intensive care or extended stay patients (Galway UH)

- Free parking for all oncology patients and family members visiting ICU (Letterkenny)
- Family members of paediatric patients pay €6 for first 24 hrs and free thereafter (Letterkenny)
- Concession for oncology & parents of paediatric patients (Mayo UH, Portluncula)
- Discretionary arrangements on a case by case basis where there is an extended length of stay or where hardship might occur (Sligo UH)
- Parents staying long term pay €36 for first week and €10 thereafter (Crumlin)
- Long term patients and their families – 50% discount (St Vincents)
- Minimal spaces for specific circumstances (Mater)
- €12 weekly ticket available to patients/relatives in palliative care, ICU, Paediatrics or on discretionary grounds (Mullingar RH)
- Free parking for families of extremely ill patients (St Colmcilles)
- Cardiac Rehabilitation and oncology patients are free. Concessions available to immediate relatives of long term or critically ill patients. (St Lukes Kilkenny)