



Primary Care Reimbursement Service
Exit 5, M50, North Road, Finglas, Dublin 11, D11 XKF3
Tel: 01- 8647100

Roisin Shortall, T.D.
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

31st March, 2021

PQ: 16398/21

To ask the Minister for Health if he will examine an issue (details supplied) regarding the drugs payment scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Róisín Shortall.

I've received a query from a constituent regarding Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) who states the following: (Excerpt from constituent's e-mail) · PCOS is a hormonal imbalance, as a result of this I have been to see doctors, dieticians, and endocrinologists;· Finally, I found a set of medication that has been proven to work, I've been taking it for over a year now;· The medications are a combination of an injection called ozempic (semaglutide), and metformin tablets;· At the start this medication was covered by the Drug Payment Scheme, and my payment amount as a result was capped at the E124 per month leaving me paying nearly E1500 a year on medications which I need to take;· Last year ozempic was taken off the drug payment scheme unless you were diabetic. Resulting from this my monthly outputs for medicine have doubled. This has an end result of me spending almost 3000e a year on medication;· I am not a unique case, it is estimated that up to 10 percent of women have PCOS. In the Republic, more than one million women are aged between 15 and 59, which means that approximately 100,000 women here have the disease;· In addition Semiglutide has been proven to assist with fighting obesity in patients without diabetes, see here for an article on this - <https://hospitalhealthcare.com/endocrinology/significant-weight-loss-achieved-by-semaglutide-in-obese-patients-without-diabetes/>;· With Ireland having a growing obesity issue (a quick Google search shows Ireland is 33rd in the world for obesity);· I feel this is something that should be reincluded in the drug payment scheme as it was previously.

Dear Deputy Shortall,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 16398/21), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Medicines are added to the formal Reimbursement List following detailed assessments which include assessment of the clinical evidence, the economic evidence and the budget impact of a decision to reimburse specific indications of a medicine. The Primary Care Reimbursement Service is required to reimburse in line with approved decisions of the HSE and the HSE is required to formally assess each medicine and each specific use of such medicines before reimbursing them.

Semaglutide marketed as Ozempic® was approved by the HSE for addition to the Reimbursement List for the treatment of Diabetes in 2018. Diabetes is one of the Long Term Illness (LTI) conditions for which eligible LTI persons can access their medicines to treat their Diabetes free of charge. Semaglutide has not been approved for reimbursement for any other indication.

Controls are in place within the Primary Care Reimbursement Service scheme management systems (and are put in place and updated as required) on claiming processes to ensure that only HSE approved indications are reimbursed across a range of medicines. Controls are currently in place in relation to both Liraglutide (Victoza®) and Semaglutide (Ozempic®) to restrict reimbursement support to the HSE approved indication of Diabetes. Persons with Diabetes are eligible for the Long Term Illness Scheme and may access Liraglutide and Semaglutide via that eligibility. Therefore, neither medicine is made available on the Drugs Payment Scheme.

Yours sincerely,



Suzanne Doyle
Primary Care Eligibility & Reimbursement Service

The Health Service Executive operates the General Medical Services Scheme, which includes Medical Cards and GP Visit Cards, under the Health Act 1970, as amended. It has established a dedicated contact service for members of the Oireachtas specifically for queries relating to the status of Medical Cards and GP Visit Cards applications, which the Deputy / Senator may wish to use for an earlier response. Tel: 01-8647180 / email: Oireachtas.pcrs@hse.ie