



Primary Care Reimbursement Service  
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Tel: 01- 8647100

Duncan Smith, T.D.  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

5<sup>th</sup> May, 2021

PQ: 16627/21

**To ask the Minister for Health if he will consider extending the return dates for documentation for medical cards, applications and appeals where necessary given that many applications are depending on medical reports from doctors who are finding an increased demand on their workload due to the roll-out of the vaccination programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - Duncan Smith**

Dear Deputy Smith,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 16627/21), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

In advance of the pandemic, the National Medical Card Unit (NMCU) had launched its online medical card application system during 2019. During the pandemic the online system has been invaluable and has enabled many individuals to apply for a new medical card or to apply for the extension of their existing card from their home without having to resort to manual paper applications. The online system was designed to streamline the application process as it enabled individuals to upload copies of supporting document via their mobile device or computer.

Medical Card applicants are required to submit supporting documentation and medical expenses when making an application. A applicant may not qualify for a medical card based on the means test, however if they have medical expenses, they may qualify for a discretionary medical card. By submitting medical expenses at the initial application stage this would negate the need to request medical expenses during the application assessment process. Where medical expenses were not received with the initial application and in an effort to give an applicant an opportunity to obtain a Medical Card/GP Visit Card, the NMCU may request medical expenses during the application process in order for the applicant to be assessed on discretionary grounds.

A letter requesting medical expenses issues to the applicant advising if the information is not received within 21 days from the date of the letter, their medical circumstances will not be considered and the application will be completed with the

information previously provided. Currently there are no plans to extend the return dates for additional information required in order to complete an application.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Suzanne Doyle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Suzanne Doyle  
Primary Care Eligibility & Reimbursement Service