



2nd December 2021

Deputy Michael McNamara
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 56062/21 - To ask the Minister for Health the total expenditure by the HSE on walking aids and wheelchairs for the period 2016 to 2020; if he will provide information on payments to individual suppliers of relevant equipment; the efforts that have been made to recycle wheelchairs and walking aids; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Michael McNamara

Dear Deputy McNamara,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 56062/21) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

In response to your query regarding expenditures on walking aids and wheelchairs, the information is not readily available in the matter you requested. However please see the table below for the information that is available.

CHO	Total Expenditure 2016-20*
	Walking Aids & Wheelchairs
1	Data unavailable
2**	€2,505,836
3	Data unavailable
4^	€4,545,495
5	€2,875,000
6^^	€7,875,770
7	€7,750,081
8	€3,100,000
9	€8,669,432

Notes:

*The Community Health Organisations (CHOs) use a variety of different financial and coding systems, meaning that expenditure figures are not always directly comparable between CHO's. Some CHO's are unable to provide the breakdown by category requested.

**The figures for CHO 2 relate to Mayo and Roscommon only.

^ The figures for CHO 4 do not cover three years (2016-18) of the spend in Kerry.

^^ The figure for walking aids in CHO 6 comprises the entire spend on the category Beds/Hoists/Aids

In respect of reuse/recycling extensive efforts are made to recycle both wheelchairs and walking aids. In most CHO's the reuse/recycling of wheelchairs is at a figure of greater than 90%.

All returned wheelchairs undergo a cleaning and decontamination process and are serviced/repaired as required by an engineer. When wheelchairs are deemed appropriate for re-use by the engineer they are added to the available stock. Where available this recycled equipment is used in preference to ordering new stock. Given the at times urgent requirement of a wheelchair for Priority 1 clients and the bespoke nature of other wheelchairs it is not possible to achieve 100% reuse/recycling in respect of these items.

In relation to walking aids, where possible these are also reused. However, any lighter weight aluminium mobility aids for example zimmer frames with wheels, crutches, sticks and tripods are recommended as single use devices due to the nature of potential damage to the aluminium, which may call the integrity of the device into question after use by a client. These devices are therefore not recycled for use but are collected for waste recycling.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,



Seán McArt

General Manager Primary Care
National Community Operations