



26th October 2021

Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett,
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 49128/21 - To ask the Minister for Health if a grant or assistance is available to a medical card holder towards the cost of electricity for a COPD machine; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Richard Boyd Barrett

Dear Deputy Boyd Barrett,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 49128/21) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

In response to your query, eligible clients who require the use of a 'COPD machine' and other similar equipment have this equipment and associated supplies such as concentrators, BiPap machines and oxygen, provided to them by the Health Service Executive. The HSE also supports the maintenance and replacement of these pieces of equipment and associated supplies. Non-eligible clients have access to the Drug Repayment Scheme for a refund of the costs of this equipment when their expenditure on prescribed medicines and supplies or rental costs of respiratory equipment exceeds the established monthly threshold.

One CHO presently offers an electricity allowance to eligible people using these pieces of respiratory equipment. CHO 9 (Dublin North, Dublin North Central) offers an electricity allowance, which varies across the different LHO areas that comprise it, to eligible clients.

In LHO 7 area of CHO 9 they provide an allowance per two-monthly bill of €49.63 for Bord Gáis consumers and €56.40 for Electric Ireland consumers. For LHO 8 area, the allowance they give is €37.73 for all clients regardless of which Electricity provider they are with. LHO 6 area does not provide any allowance.

The continued payment of this allowance in parts of CHO 9 is based on historic practices within those particular local areas. The expectation is that these remaining local areas will adjust their practices to become compliant with those in every other CHO across the country, where in the areas that had such an allowance, it was discontinued many years ago.

In respect of individuals who may be experiencing difficulty in paying their electricity bills financial assistance is available to them via their Community Welfare Officer in the Department of Social Protection. It would be advisable for them to contact their local Community Welfare Officer who can best advise on the exact process for accessing this assistance.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seán McArt'.

Seán McArt

General Manager Primary Care
National Community Operations