



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Príomhúil

Seomra 243, Ospidéal Dr Steevens,
Lána Steevens, Baile Átha Cliath 8.
D08 W2A8.

Office of the Head of Operations,
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29th April 2022

Deputy Bríd Smith,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 19233/22 - To ask the Minister for Health the reason some six CHO areas provide an electricity subsidy for patients using full-time oxygen, ventilation machines while others do not; his views on whether this practice effectively amounts to a postcode lottery for those needing support with electricity costs which have spiralled and for whom a decision to scale back on electricity usage is not an option; if this subsidy will be made available for all those requiring 24 hour oxygen, ventilation regardless of the area in which they live; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Bríd Smith

Dear Deputy Smith,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 19233/22) 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.

While some of the local areas in the country did historically provide such a subsidy, this has been discontinued over recent years, and at present no HSE CHO is providing an electricity subsidy to new clients. Existing clients in some CHO's who did in the past provide such a subsidy, continue to receive this subsidy. There is now a standard approach to this matter throughout the country.

In respect of individuals who may be experiencing difficulty in paying their electricity and other energy bills, financial assistance is available to them via their Community Welfare Officer in the Department of Social Protection, and the various schemes that they operate. Individuals in need of assistance should be advised to contact their local Social Protection Office who can best advise on the exact processes for accessing the various schemes that they operate.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.



Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Seán McArt'.

Seán McArt
General Manager Primary Care
National Community Operation