



Colm Burke, T.D.  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

4<sup>th</sup> April 2022

PQ: 14331/22

**To ask the Minister for Health the estimated cost of making the flu vaccine available free of charge for all medical card holders; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Colm Burke**

Dear Deputy Burke,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 14331/22), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The list of those eligible for a free flu vaccine is available on the HSE website:

<https://www2.hse.ie/screening-and-vaccinations/flu-vaccine/getting/>

It includes all people aged between 2-17 and everyone over 50, but also includes a number of other categories such as healthcare workers, pregnant women and other vulnerable groups and their carers.

The number of people who received an Influenza or Pneumococcal/Influenza vaccination during the Flu Season, Sep 2020 to Aug 2021 was 1,230,258.

The total paid in fees to GPs and Pharmacists in 2021 was €33,337,110. The reimbursement rate is €15 per QIV vaccine or €20 per LAIV nasal vaccine (for children aged 2 years or more and less than 18 years), but there is an additional €100 (QIV) or €150 (LAIV) bonus paid for every 10 patients.

The total number of medical card holders as of 1 March 2022 was 1,536,070. Those aged between 17 and 50 number approximately 500,000 and if 100,000 of these were in the non-age categories of those eligible for a free vaccine, there would be approx. 400,000 MC holders who would not be eligible under the current scheme.

Were these to be included, then the additional cost would be of the order of €10m.  
(400,000 x €15 + 40,000 X €100 = €10m).

This covers the fee element alone. The actual product cost is not covered by PCRS. Having contacted the HSE National Immunisation Office we were informed that the price paid by the HSE for flu vaccines is commercially confidential and as such cannot be released. The HSE provides the flu vaccine for anyone recommended by Department of Health as eligible free of charge.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suzanne Doyle', written in a cursive style.

Suzanne Doyle  
Primary Care Eligibility & Reimbursement Service