



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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Deputy Sean Sherlock TD,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

20th February 2023

PQ6048/23* *“To ask the Minister for Health if he will explore a simplified process for the treatment abroad scheme, whereby if a person or a child is required to make multiple trips for surgery and or observation, that paperwork would be reduced or a separate pathway created to simplify their paperwork to reduce bureaucracy on the patient.”*

Dear Deputy Sherlock,

Thank you for your parliamentary question referenced above, which has been forwarded to me for direct reply.

In general terms, the Treatment Abroad Scheme (TAS) allows for an Irish based public hospital consultant to refer their public patient to the public health system of another EU/EEA, the UK or Switzerland for treatment which is not available in Ireland.

Applications to the scheme are for specific episodes of treatment and the care of the patient reverts to the Irish based referring consultant immediately following the treatment outside the state. The TAS may not be used to in anyway transfer the care of a patient to a service abroad on an ongoing basis. There are two specific reasons for this both based on TAS experience of applications for funding:

- It ensures the patient continues to be actively in the care of the relevant consultant in Ireland as it does not allow for a consultant to transfer the care of the patient to a service outside the jurisdiction. It is important that patients are afforded their right to access care in Ireland in the first instance and not have this right to public care in Ireland in anyway diminished.
- From time to time treatments become available in Ireland, which were not previously available. This may be by way of new services with specific funding or by way of consultants returning to/taking up posts in Ireland with expertise, which previously had not been available in this country. Where this happens patients must access the service in Ireland in the first instance. If the relevant service in Ireland deems it more appropriate for a patient to continue to access the healthcare abroad for any reason, that service can make an application to the TAS with the patient.

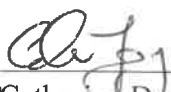
It is worth noting that for certain types of care it is expected a consultant would identify more than one episode of care in an application. By way of example for a paediatric transplant it is expected the application will include for example, initial consultation, pre-operative

assessment, surgery, follow-up consultation etc. In doing so the TAS will be in a position to offer decision on same based on one application.

It is difficult to give a definitive reply without details of a specific case, and should you wish to provide patient details I may be in a position to give a more detailed reply.

If you have any queries, or would like to discuss further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Catherine Donohoe

A/Assistant National Director

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