



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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Deputy David Stanton TD,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

02nd March 2023

PQ61225/22* *“To ask the Minister for Health the number of applications made under the Cross Border Directive in 2021 and in 2022 respectively; the number of these applications that were successful and the number that were not granted; to provide a breakdown, in tabular form of the procedures involved and countries involved in each year; the overall cost to the State in each of the two years; the number of successful patients awaiting payment at present; the waiting times involved for same; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”*

Dear Deputy Stanton,

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

Under the provisions of the Directive as implemented in Ireland a patient may apply for Prior Notification, which is optional and/or reimbursement of healthcare costs. In 2021 and 2022 the number of applications for Prior Notification were 293 and 94 respectively. Prior Notification applications are applications where a patient is seeking confirmation of the estimated value and confirmation of compliance with public patient pathways in advance of proceeding with inpatient care.

In 2021 and 2022 the number of applications for reimbursement were 1,914 and 1,041 respectively. The cost of reimbursements to patients in 2021 was €7,811,327 and in 2022 it was €4,323,231.72.

In understanding these figures it should be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted patients' ability to travel to access healthcare.

	2021	2022
No. of applications for Prior Notification processed	293	94
No. of reimbursements processed	1914	1145
Cost of reimbursement processed	€7,811,327	€4,323,231.72

In 2021 of the 2737 applications for reimbursement processed, of these 1914 were approved and 148 were declined.

In 2022 of the 1145 applications for reimbursement processed, of these 1041 were approved and 104 were declined.

All applicants whose application for reimbursement are declined are notified of the right to appeal that decision. In addition, applicants who are approved are advised they may appeal the value of the reimbursement.

In 2021 166 appeals were received. 113 of these had the original decision upheld and 53 had the original decision overturned. This equates to 34% had the decision overturned at appeal stage.

In 2022 101 appeals were received. 67 of these had the original decision upheld and 33 had the original decision overturned. This equates to 33% had the decision overturned at appeal stage.

CBD Number of Appeals					
Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Appeals Received	113	105	249	166	101
Decisions Upheld	83	79	181	113	67
Decisions Overturned	30	26	68	53	33
Appeals Withdrawn	0	0	0	0	1
% of decision overturned as a % of the total number of appeals.	26%	25%	27%	34%	33%

The HSE does not record procedures information, rather information is recorded in relation to the specialty the patient accessed. The following are tables of the specialties accessed.

Please bear in mind that a patient may access more than one specialty and thus the number relating to specialties may not equate to the number of reimbursements processed.

Top List of Procedures/ Major Diagnostic Category 2021	2021 Total
Orthopaedics	1755
Ophthalmology	897
ENT	246
Orthodontics	167
Gynaecology	225
Neurology	168
General Surgery	149
Infectious Diseases	82
Gastroenterology	162
Urology	71
Plastic Surgery	61
Vascular	49
Cardiology	33
Dermatology	20
Rehabilitation	15
Other	19
Rheumatology	12
Oral & Maxillo-Facial	12
Radiology	9
Psychotherapy	8
Endocrinology	9
Podiatric	8
Dental	17
Paediatrics	5
Oncology	8
Pain Management	3
Respiratory	1
Grand Total	4211

Top List of Procedures/ Major Diagnostic Category 2022	2022 Total
Orthopaedics	1199
Ophthalmology	172
ENT	123
Orthodontics	215
Gynaecology	130
Neurology	88
General Surgery	82
Infectious Diseases	56
Gastroenterology	393
Urology	46
Plastic Surgery	27
Vascular	27
Cardiology	12
Dermatology	2
Rehabilitation	278
Other	14
Rheumatology	34
Oral & Maxillo-Facial	7
Radiology	4
Psychiatry	0
Endocrinology	11
Podiatric	1
Colorectal	4
Dental	8
Paediatrics	0
Oncology	0
Pain Management	0
Respiratory	3
Grand Total	2936

Country	2021	2022
Poland	376	927
Lithuania	83	352
Germany	67	87
Spain	517	855
Netherlands	0	1
Belgium	4	5
Latvia	28	47
Portugal	0	5
France	2	0
Hungary	9	12
Italy	1	5
Czech Republic	9	48
Slovakia	14	27
Romania	8	25
Estonia	3	5
Bulgaria	0	1
Croatia	5	3
Austria	0	1
Greece	0	1
Slovenia	0	0
Finland	0	0
Norway	0	0
Total	1126	2407

The value of reimbursements in 2021 was €7,811,327 and in 2022 it was €4,323,231.72. Please bear in mind there were COVID-19 travel restrictions in place during these years which impacted the number of patients accessing healthcare under the Directive.

	2021	2022
Cost of reimbursement processed	€7,811,327	€4,323,231.72

Backlog

The CBD and NIPHS offices as at 14th Feb 2023 are currently operating with a 3 month backlog (currently processing applications received in Nov 2022). It is estimated there are 1,500 applications awaiting processing as at 14/2/2023. This is a cause for concern in relation to delivering a quality patient service.

Resources

When the CBD and later the NIPHS were introduced the HSE did not receive specific resources to operate the schemes. In 2020, the then National Director Acute Hospital Services approved 22 WTEs to operate the scheme effectively regularising/approving the staffing level operating the schemes at that time. The approved staffing level was appropriate to the 2020 and 2021 level of activity, which was significantly reduced reflecting travel restrictions due to COVID-19. Of the 22 WTEs only 7 staff members have actually been recruited and taken up post. The offices rely on agency staff resulting in high turnover of trained staff when trained agency staff leave to take up permanent positions elsewhere.

If you have any queries, or would like to discuss further, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0872668759 or via catherinet.donohoe@hse.ie.

Yours sincerely,



Catherine Donohoe

A/Assistant National Director