



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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Deputy Duncan Smith TD,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

9th June 2023

PQ27269/23* *“To ask the Minister for Health if there have been any circumstances where the State has covered the cost or provided the direct funding for pectus carinatum bracing for an individual, through either the cross Border Directive or on a discretionary basis to be carried out within another state; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”*

Dear Deputy Smith,

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

The HSE operates three schemes, which allow a patient to access planned healthcare in Europe. The schemes are the Treatment Abroad Scheme (TAS), the Cross Border Directive (CBD) scheme and the Northern Ireland Planned Healthcare Scheme (NIPHS). The following is a quick overview of each scheme:

- In general the TAS allows for an Irish based public hospital consultant to refer a public patient to the public health system of another EU/EEA member state, the UK or Switzerland for treatment which is not available in Ireland.
- In general, the CBD allows public patients to access healthcare in another EU/EEA country, which they are entitled to access in Ireland. The patient pays for the treatment up front and claims reimbursement upon return to Ireland. Reimbursement is at the cost of the treatment abroad or the cost of the treatment in Ireland whichever is the lesser. Public patient pathways as they apply to accessing the same healthcare in Ireland apply to accessing the healthcare abroad under the CBD.
- The NIPHS allows public patients to access healthcare in the private healthcare sector in Northern Ireland, which they are entitled to access in Ireland. The patient pays for the treatment up front and claims reimbursement upon return to Ireland. Reimbursement is at the cost of the treatment in the private healthcare sector in Northern Ireland or the cost of the treatment in Ireland whichever is the lesser. Public patient pathways as they apply to accessing the same healthcare in Ireland apply to accessing the healthcare abroad under the NIPHS.

I understand from a recent response to your PQ from CHI that *“Pectus Carinatum bracing is considered to be a cosmetic treatment and is currently not funded by the HSE in Ireland.”* On

this basis it may be the case that accessing this care outside the state would fall outside the remit of the above listed schemes. It is not possible to give a definitive answer in the absence of a fully completed application form to the relevant scheme.

The brace therapy in question is available via the NHS in the UK and possibly other centres in the Europe.

Examples of such services in the United Kingdom would be:

- Mr Shyam Kolvekar, Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon, St Bartholomew's Hospital - London.
- Mr Marco Sarchi, Consultant Thoracic Surgeon, University College London Hospital, 16-18 Westmoreland Street, Marylebone, London W1G 8PH.
- Mr Aman Coonar, Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon, Papworth Hospital - Cambridge.
- The Cardiothoracic Unit at Southampton General Hospital.

The patient and his/her treating consultant may wish to consider submitting an application for the treatment under the TAS. Please be aware that previous advice to the TAS on a previous application has advised that the treatment in question is not a proven form of treatment and funding was not recommended. If an application is submitted a decision will be issued without delay.

Applications forms are available on the HSE website or if you wish I am happy to have an application form emailed or posted to you or directly to the patient.

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

Yours sincerely,



Catherine Donohoe

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