



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta  
Géaroibríochtaí

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An Bóthar Míleata, Cill Mhaighneann, Baile  
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Deputy Bernard Durkan  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

4<sup>th</sup> April 2023

***PQ12853/23 To ask the Minister for Health the number of patients with severe asthma currently being treated with anti-IL-5 therapies; if any additional funding has been put in place for new patients in 2023; the number of patients he expects to be treated in 2023; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - Bernard J. Durkan***

Dear Deputy Durkan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to two elements of the above Parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Improving outcomes for patients with Severe Refractory Eosinophilic Asthma remains a priority for the HSE. The National Clinical Programme for Respiratory Medicine has collaborated with the Acute Hospitals Drug Management Programme (AHDMP) to revise the Model of Care and protocols for anti-IL5 therapies. This has led to a robust, transparent, cost effective and equitable procedure to access these Medicines that means regardless of where a citizen lives, they have an equal opportunity to access these medicines and the tax payer can be assured that the process is proven to be cost effective. The protocols include the clinical criteria to ensure patients are prioritised on the basis of clinical need and the potential for treatment benefit.

Since October 2021, two out of the three centrally funded anti-IL5 therapies have become available for self-administration with medication access through the community via the High-Tech Scheme. The AHDMP have worked closely with the Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS) to ensure the seamless transition of medication access for patients from the hospital to community setting. This progress has been welcomed both by patients and Severe Asthma Centres as a positive step in improving access to anti-IL therapies.

Since August 2018, central funding has been approved for a total of 572 patients to access anti-IL5 therapies for severe asthma. Additional resources have been made available for further provision of anti-IL5 therapy for Severe Refractory Eosinophilic Asthma in 2023. To date, funding has been approved for 55 patients in 2023. The total number approved in 2023 will be dependent on the number of patients identified as likely to benefit from anti-IL5 therapy, as per the aforementioned anti-IL5 protocols and available resources.



**Additional notes:**

- Asthma is the most common chronic respiratory disease in the Republic of Ireland affecting people of all ages and all socio-economic groups. Ireland has the fourth highest prevalence of Asthma worldwide, and current estimates suggest that there are approximately 450,000 people with doctor-diagnosed Asthma in Ireland (approx. 1 in 10 of population). It is worth noting that the majority of individuals with Asthma ultimately do not need treatment with anti-IL5 therapies when expertly clinically assessed in our Severe Asthma clinical centres.
- The number of patients on anti-IL5 agents funded directly by acute hospitals rather than from central HSE funding is managed within the individual hospitals and not by the AHDMP.

I trust this is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Caroline Lynch', written over a horizontal line.

**Caroline Lynch  
General Manager  
Acute Operation**