



Office of the Head of Primary Care
South East Community Healthcare
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10th May 2023

Mr. Colm Burke TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 20686/23

To ask the Minister for Health the action that is being taken to expedite the processing of applications for medical card holders in the South East CHO 5 area who require care under the HSE community ophthalmic services scheme for persons who require eye examination and optical appliances, in view of the fact that the processing of these applications is taking anything up to eight weeks and persons are being denied access to ophthalmic services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Burke,

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

I have examined the matter and the following response outlines the current position.

In Carlow/Kilkenny the processing of applications for medical card holders in the South East Community Healthcare Area (formerly CHO 5) who require care under the HSE community ophthalmic services scheme for persons who require eye examination and optical appliances (called LOA1 forms) timeframe is within 5-7 days. Any reason for delays would relate to periods of annual leave cover or allowances for postage to Optician or applicant.

In South Tipperary the processing time for LOA1 forms is within 2-4 days. Any reason for delays would relate to periods of annual leave cover or allowances for postage to Optician or applicant.

Waterford has a current backlog of 7 weeks due to a staff vacancy which is currently in the process of recruitment. Staff in the ophthalmology department are prioritising forms and dealing with phone queries in relation to same.

Wexford (George's Street) has a 4 week backlog. Staff are prioritising forms and dealing with phone queries in relation to same. New Ross, Enniscorthy and Gorey have no backlog at present.

I trust this information is of assistance to you. Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anna Marie Lanigan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Anna Marie Lanigan
Head of Service-Primary Care/Assistant National Director
South East Community Healthcare