



Office of the Head of Primary Care
South East Community Healthcare
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7th June 2023

Mr. Paul Kehoe TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 25915/23

To ask the Minister for Health the reason elderly persons in County Wexford who do not have a full medical card are refused access to public health nurse services; if this decision can be reversed; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Kehoe,

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.

Public Health Nursing services are an essential component of the Community Health Nursing structure. Albeit that every attempt is made to provide Public Health Nursing service in accordance with clinical need, the current policy for accessing Public Health Nursing service within South East Community Healthcare is as outlined below:

In relation to Public Health Nursing Services for older persons, eligibility includes:

- All patients with an identified clinical need holding GMS medical card eligibility, regardless of age.
- Persons who hold a GP only card are not eligible for PHN service; proposed exceptions must be discussed and approved by the Assistant Director of Public Health Nursing.

There are various exceptions to above criteria which include:

- All palliative care patients regardless of age and medical card status.
- Patients who do not hold a GMS card but have been approved for a Home Care Package.
- RPHN/Locum/RGN can continue to provide a PHN service to patients who previously held a GMS card but whose eligibility for the GMS card is under review. This exception is discussed with the Assistant Director of Public Health Nursing service.
- Patients with long term illness card requiring clinical nursing care.

In circumstances where a patient does not meet the criteria for receiving a Public Health Nursing Service, i.e. does not have a GMS Card, and has been referred to the service:

The Area RPHN/Locum/RGN will make direct contact with the patient with the aim of ascertaining the identified clinical need, access to transport and ability to attend GP / Practice Nurse. Pending the outcome of this review assessment, a decision is made on the provision of Public Health Nursing service. If relevant the patient is advised to consider making an application for a GMS medical Card.

Access to Public Health Nursing services is determined within the available resources and is prioritised in accordance with clinical need.

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 cursive script that reads "Anna Marie Lanigan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Anna Marie Lanigan

Head of Service-Primary Care/Assistant National Direct_
South East Community Healthcare