



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta  
Géaroibríochtaí

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Deputy Mick Barry  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

12th September 2023

***PQ 37994/23 - To ask the Minister for Health if he will take steps to ensure that no public hospital engages debt collectors to collect outstanding fees from patients; if he will outline the policy in relation to collecting outstanding debts from seriously ill patients; the hospitals which employ debt collecting companies; the names of those companies; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Mick Barry***

Dear Deputy Barry,

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

Patients who attend at public hospitals are, depending on their eligibility, and subject to certain exemptions, liable to statutory charges. These are levied under the provisions of the 1970 Health Act. Until recent changes were enacted the charges were:

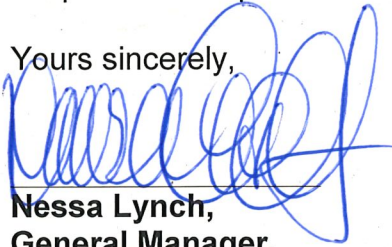
- €100 for an Emergency Department attendance, and
- €80 for an overnight stay, up to a maximum of €800 in any 12 month period.

Government approved, on 24th Jan 2023, the General Scheme of the Health (Abolition of Public Inpatient Charges) Bill 2023 which provided for the abolition of the acute public inpatient charge. This measure, which came into effect on April 17th, removed the acute public in-patient charge of €80 per day, up to a maximum of €800 in a year (including day-case charges), for people accessing care as a public patient in public hospitals. The €100 in respect of an Emergency Department attendance remains in place.

The HSE has a statutory obligation to levy and collect statutory charges and the HSE's National Financial Regulation NFR B2-Income, Charges and Debtors, <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/finance/nfr/nfrb2.pdf>, provides guidance to hospitals as to the minimum controls applicable. Section 2.6 refers to debt collection referral.

Hospitals have the discretion to operate payment plans where appropriate. Amounts owed in respect of inpatient charges raised prior to the abolition remain payable and hospitals are required to collect these charges.

Yours sincerely,



**Nessa Lynch,  
General Manager,  
Acute Operations**