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29th January 2024

Deputy Kathleen Funchion
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2.

PQ 1423/24 - To ask the Minister for Health what transport is available to patients with medical cards who regularly have to travel to appointments outside their own county; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Kathleen Funchion

Dear Deputy Funchion,

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

While there is no statutory requirement for the HSE to provide Patient Transport Services, transport services can be provided on a discretionary basis. Examples of cases where transport services can be provided include where a patient's medical condition impacts to such an extent that necessitates the use of Patient Transport Services, and where the cost of travelling to a service would cause undue hardship to the patient.

The affordability of such services, which must be within financial limits of the local Community Healthcare Organisations, must ultimately be made by the budget holder within the Community Healthcare Organisation. Such decisions must also be made in line with other related policies and legislation.

To avail of transport services, a person's medical needs must be assessed by a Health Care Professional (e.g., General Practitioner).

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

David Walsh
National Director
Community Operations