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Cian O'Callaghan, T.D.
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

14th April 2025

PQ: 16461/25

To ask the Minister for Health if she will address the medicine shortages that are forcing pharmacists to source expensive unlicensed medicines for patients with medical cards (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. -Cian O'Callaghan

Dear Deputy O'Callaghan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 16461/25), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) is responsible for co-ordinating the management of shortages of medicines on the Irish market. The HPRA has an existing Medicine Shortages Framework in place to help prevent shortages from occurring and to reduce the impact of shortages on patients by co-ordinating the management of potential or actual shortages as they arise. Available at <http://www.hpra.ie/homepage/about-us/publications-forms/guidance-documents/item?id=c81f0b26-9782-6eee-9b55-ff00008c97d0&t=/docs/default-source/publications-forms/guidance-documents/adv-g0020-medicines-shortages-framework-v2>.

The HPRA works with a variety of stakeholders including the HSE to respond to potential shortages and reduce the impact of shortages on patients.

Where there is a shortage of a product from the Reimbursement List, the dispensing pharmacy can contact the PCRS to query reimbursement. Applications for reimbursement support will be

considered for medical card holders under Discretionary Hardship Arrangements as per Circular 39/19 (attached).

Yours sincerely,

Suzanne Doyle
Primary Care Reimbursement Service

The Health Service Executive operates the General Medical Services Scheme, which includes Medical Cards and GP Visit Cards, under the Health Act 1970, as amended. It has established a dedicated contact service for members of the Oireachtas specifically for queries relating to the status of Medical Cards and GP Visit Cards applications, which the Deputy / Senator may wish to use for an earlier response. Tel: 01-8647180 / email: Oireachtas.pcrs@hse.ie