



Deputy David Cullinane T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2.

3rd April 2025

PQ : 16526/25

To ask the Minister for Health if any vertebral body tethering (VBT) procedures have been funded through the treatment abroad scheme; and if so, the number of Irish children that have received VBT overseas.

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

Thank you for your parliamentary question referenced above, which was passed to the HSE for response.

In general the Treatment Abroad Scheme (TAS) provides for the funding of a public patient from Ireland to access treatment which is not available in Ireland, in another EU/EEA country, the UK or Switzerland. A core principle of the governing legislation, EU Regulations 883/2004 and 987/2009 is that the patient must apply for and be granted prior authorisation before accessing the treatment. The HSE cannot be held liable for the costs of healthcare, the HSE has not agreed in advance to assume.

I can confirm that there are no records of any patient accessing vertebral body tethering (VBT) under the provisions of the Treatment Abroad Scheme (TAS) in the years 2020 to 2025 inclusive.

If I can be of any further assistance in this matter please do not hesitate to revert to me.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Donohoe
Head of Function/Service