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Seán Canney, T.D.
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

24th April 2025

PQ: 16664/25

**To ask the Minister for Health when weight loss drugs will be made available to people on medical cards as those struggling to lose large amounts of weight, but who do not have diabetes, would benefit significantly from the availability of this medication; and if she will make a statement on the matter. -
Seán Canney**

Dear Deputy Canney,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 16664/25), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The HSE follows statutory processes around the addition of medicines to the reimbursement list/schemes. Under those statutory processes, the HSE is legally required to consider a range of criteria which include unmet need, clinical evidence, economic evidence, budget impact and the resources available when making reimbursement decisions (i.e. add a medicine to the reimbursement list). The reimbursement decisions have to be in line with the relevant legislation, namely the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013 (the legislation the HSE operates under for pricing and reimbursement of medicines).

In accordance with the legislation, a medicine must have a marketing authorisation (licence) to be included in the formal list of reimbursable items. A pharmaceutical company can apply to the HSE for reimbursement for a specific indication (use) of a specific licensed medicine. Medicines can have more than one licensed (market authorised) indication and each indication represents a separate application.

Ozempic® (semaglutide) currently has an EU marketing authorisation for the treatment of adults with insufficiently controlled type 2 diabetes mellitus as an adjunct to diet and exercise. Following EU marketing authorisation for this indication (use), the HSE approved the addition of Semaglutide (Ozempic®) to the list of reimbursable items in September 2018.

Ozempic® currently does not have an EU marketing authorisation for the treatment of weight loss or any condition other than type 2 diabetes mellitus.

Controls are in place within PCRS on claiming processes to ensure that only HSE approved indications are reimbursed across a range of medicines. Controls are currently in place for the Glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonists to restrict reimbursement support to the HSE approved indication of Diabetes. This includes Victoza® (liraglutide), Ozempic® (semaglutide) and Trulicity® (dulaglutide).

Diabetes is one of the Long Term Illness (LTI) conditions for which eligible LTI persons can access their medicines to treat their Diabetes free of charge. Patients diagnosed with Diabetes Mellitus are entitled to be registered under the LTI Scheme.

Wegovy® (semaglutide) which is indicated and licensed for weight management is not reimbursable under Community Drug Schemes or any arrangement as it is undergoing formal pricing and reimbursement assessment with the National Centre for Pharmacoeconomics (NCPE).

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