



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte, Seirbhís Aisíocaíochta Cúraim Phríomhúil  
Bealach amach 5, M50, An Bóthar Thuaidh, Fionnghlas  
Baile Átha Cliath 11, D11 XKF3  
Fón: (01) 864 7100 Facs: (01) 834 3589

Health Service Executive, Primary Care Reimbursement Service  
Exit 5, M50, North Road, Finglas,  
Dublin 11, D11 XKF3  
Tel: (01) 864 7100 Fax: (01) 834 3589

Duncan Smith, T.D.  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

28<sup>th</sup> April 2025

PQ: 19124/25

**To ask the Minister for Health if she will approve of and provide funding for the combination treatment of Ibrutinib and venetoclax for the treatment of chronic lymphocytic leukaemia; and if she will make a statement on the matter. -Duncan Smith**

Dear Deputy Smith,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 19124/25), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The HSE is committed to providing access to as many medicines as possible, in as timely a fashion as possible, from the resources available (provided) to it.

The HSE robustly assesses applications for pricing and reimbursement to make sure that it can stretch available resources as far as possible and to deliver the best value in relation to each medicine and ultimately more medicines to Irish citizens and patients.

HSE decisions on which medicines are reimbursed by the taxpayer are made on objective, scientific and economic grounds.

There are formal processes which govern applications for the pricing and reimbursement of medicines, and new uses of existing medicines, to be funded and / or reimbursed.

The HSE considers the following criteria prior to making any decision on pricing / reimbursement in line with the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013:

- (1) The health needs of the public,
- (2) The cost effectiveness of meeting health needs by supplying the item concerned rather than providing other health services,

- (3) The availability and suitability of items for supply or reimbursement,
- (4) The proposed costs, benefits, and risks of the item or listed item relative to therapeutically similar items or listed items provided in other health service settings and the level of certainty in relation to the evidence of those costs, benefits and risks,
- (5) The potential or actual budget impact of the item or listed item,
- (6) The clinical need for the item or listed item,
- (7) The appropriate level of clinical supervision required in relation to the item to ensure patient safety,
- (8) The efficacy (performance in trial), effectiveness (performance in real situations) and added therapeutic benefit against existing standards of treatment (how much better it treats a condition than existing therapies) and
- (9) The resources available to the HSE

**In terms of the specific details of the application for pricing and reimbursement of ibrutinib (Imbruvica®) and venetoclax, used for the treatment of patients with previously untreated chronic lymphocytic leukaemia:**

The HSE received an application for pricing and reimbursement on the 25<sup>th</sup> July 2022 from Janssen (the applicant) for ibrutinib (Imbruvica®) in combination with venetoclax, for the treatment of adult patients with previously untreated chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL).

- The first step in the process is the submission of a Rapid Review dossier (a clinical and economic dossier) to the National Centre for Pharmacoeconomics (NCPE) for assessment. The HSE commissioned the Rapid Review process on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022.
- The NCPE Rapid Review assessment report was received by the HSE on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2022. The NCPE advised the HSE that a full Health Technology Assessment (HTA) was recommended to assess the clinical effectiveness and cost effectiveness of ibrutinib in combination with venetoclax compared with the current standard of care.
- The HSE commissioned a full Health Technology Assessment (HTA) on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022 as per agreed processes.
- The NCPE Health Technology Assessment Report was received by the HSE on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024. The NCPE recommended that ibrutinib in combination with venetoclax, for the treatment of adult patients with previously untreated chronic lymphocytic leukaemia, not be considered for reimbursement unless cost effectiveness can be improved relative to existing treatments. <https://www.ncpe.ie/ibrutinib-imbruvica-hta-id-22054/>
- The HSE Corporate Pharmaceutical Unit (CPU) is the interface between the HSE and the Pharmaceutical Industry in relation to medicine pricing and reimbursement applications. The HSE CPU has met with the applicant to discuss this application.
- The Drugs Group is the national committee which the HSE has in place to make recommendations on the pricing and reimbursement of medicines. The membership of the HSE Drugs Group includes public interest members. The HSE Drugs Group considers all of the evidence and makes a recommendation to the HSE Senior Leadership Team. The totality of clinical and economic evidence for ibrutinib (Imbruvica®) in combination with venetoclax, for the treatment of adult

patients with previously untreated chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL) was comprehensively and extensively reviewed by the Drugs Group at the July 2024 meeting. The Drugs Group by majority did not recommend in favour of reimbursement of ibrutinib (Imbruvica®) in combination with venetoclax in this indication (<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/cpu/drugs-group-minutes/hse-drugs-group-minutes-july-2024.pdf>).

- The decision making authority in the HSE is the HSE Senior Leadership Team. The HSE Senior Leadership Team decides on the basis of all the demands it is faced with (across all services) whether it can fund a new medicine, or new use of an existing medicine, from the resources that have been provided to it in line with the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013. The HSE Senior Leadership Team supported the Drugs Group recommendation not to reimburse ibrutinib (Imbruvica®) in combination with venetoclax, for the treatment of adult patients with previously untreated chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL).

The application for ibrutinib (Imbruvica®) in combination with venetoclax remains under consideration. The HSE cannot make any comment on possible outcomes from the ongoing process.

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](mailto:Oireachtas.pcrs@hse.ie)**