



Deputy Colm Burke, T.D.
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

29th April 2025

PQ : 19562/25

To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 322 of 2 April 2025, the number of cancer patients approved under the treatment abroad scheme between the years 2020 to 2024 received funding to cover their economic air or sea fares under the scheme; the number of companion/carers were approved for funding for economic air or sea fares under the scheme, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. -Colm Burke

Dear Deputy Burke,

I refer to your parliamentary question referenced above, which was passed to the HSE for response. Unfortunately, some of the information you have requested is not recorded, therefore it is not available in format requested.

In my response to an earlier PQ, I explained that EU Regulation does not require the patients' home countries to fund the costs of travel or subsistence. However, in recognition that air and sea fares are not costs a patient would incur if the treatment was available in Ireland, the HSE, subject to available funding, will fund the economic air or sea fares of individual patients. In certain circumstances the air or sea fares of a companion/carer are also approved where such companion/carer is necessary to assist the patient. In relation to a paediatric patients the costs of one or both parents/guardians are also reimbursed.

The number of patients who have been approved funding under the Treatment Abroad Scheme (TAS) in respect of cancer treatments between 2020 and 2024 was previously provided. I can confirm that all patients approved funding under the TAS are also approved to seek reimbursement of costs in respect of air and sea fares.

A patient who travels abroad for treatment with TAS funding approval, may and is likely to travel abroad for the purpose of the treatment on more than one occasion. For example a patient may treatment abroad may require travel for the consultation, the surgery, and or/follow up review appointments etc. Approved patients may submit claims for reimbursement of associated air/sea fares in relation to each of these visits.

There are factors which should be understood when reading the data set out in the table below:

- not all approved TAS patients submit claims for reimbursement of air/sea fares and,
- not all approved patients travel in their year of approval i.e. a patient may be approved in 2024 but may not attend an appointment abroad until 2025.

These details are by way of explanation in the disparity between the previously provided table in respect of numbers of approved patients and the table below which relates specifically to the number of patients who travelled and the number of patients who claimed reimbursement of air or sea fares.



The below table outlines the number of patients who submitted claims for reimbursement and received funding for air/sea fares associated with appointments abroad, under the TAS, for the years 2020 to 2024. It further details the number of those claims which included reimbursement of air or sea fares for a companion/carer/parent/guardian.

Year	No. of cancer patients who travelled during the specified year.	No. of Travel Claims submitted and received funding for air/sea fares.	Of the no. of claims submitted how many included costs for companion/carer/parent/guardian.
2024	107	65	48
2023	117	117	76
2022	139	148	92
2021	144	166	99
2020	91	83	43

I trust this is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Donohoe
Head of Function/Service