



Ceann Feidhme/Seitbhíse,
Seirbhísí agus Scéimeanna Náisiúnta
Oifig Uimh. 3, Coimpléasc Oifige Chill
Chríona, Chill Chainnigh

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Deputy Colm Burke,
Dáil Éireann,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

24th April 2025

PQ 19563/25

To ask the Minister for Health the financial supports available for patients approved under the treatment abroad scheme for travel expenses where their air or sea travel fares are not covered under the scheme; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Burke,

Thank you for your parliamentary question referenced above. 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, but is available 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.

Neither the EU Regulations nor the Department of Health and Children Guidelines provide for the funding of travel or subsistence for patients accessing treatment abroad under the TAS. However, in recognition that air or sea fares are not costs a patient would incur if the treatment was available in Ireland, the HSE introduced the National Travel Policy for the TAS, which funds the economic air or sea fares subject to available funding.

The National Travel Policy introduced by the Treatment Abroad Scheme (TAS) some years ago recognizes that patients accessing treatment abroad which is not available in Ireland via funding from the Scheme, would not incur air or sea fares if the treatment was available in Ireland. In recognition of this the National Travel Policy provides for the reimbursement of economic air or sea fares for patient. In some instances air and sea fares of a carer to accompany the patient are also provided for. For example where the patient requires assistance to travel the costs of a carer to assist the person will also be reimbursed. Similarly in the case of a child the air or sea fares of one or both parents/guardians are reimbursed.

I hope this provides the clarification required but if I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Donohoe
Head of Function/Service