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Naoise Ó Muirí, T.D.  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

30<sup>th</sup> July 2025

PQ: 40014/25

**To ask the Minister for Health if her attention has been drawn to the proposal that high protein oral nutritional supplements are administered under a managed access programme, the effect this may have on patient wellbeing and recovery; and if she will make a statement on the matter. -Naoise Ó Muirí**

Dear Deputy Ó Muirí,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 40014/25), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Foods for Special Medical Purposes (FSMP) including Clinical Nutritional Products are added to the Reimbursement List following a pricing and reimbursement application from nutritional companies in line with the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013. In 2023, total expenditure by the PCRS on Clinical Nutritional Products on the General Medical Services (GMS), Drugs Payment Scheme (DPS) and Long Term Illness (LTI) Scheme was €48.28 million, €7.68 million and €8.56 million respectively.

Analysis shows there has been an increase in utilisation of, and total expenditure on, high-protein Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) under the various Community Drug Schemes over the last five years. The total monthly expenditure increased from approximately €0.49 million in July 2019 to approximately €1.39 million in December 2023. The number of patients in receipt of high-protein ONS on a monthly basis increased from approximately 6,200 to approximately 16,500 over the same time period.

The PCRS Annual Reports are published online at [PCRS Annual Reports - Statistical Analysis of Claims and Payments](#).

Given the high expenditure growth in this area, the HSE-Medicines Management Programme (MMP) undertook a review of high-protein ONS with a view to identifying preferred product(s) as part of the

MMP's remit to support safe, effective and cost-effective prescribing in the Irish healthcare setting. The evaluation report is publically available online at [preferred-high-protein-ons-evaluation.pdf](#).

Following review of the submissions received in accordance with the criteria outlined in the roadmap ([MMP roadmap for the identification of preferred high-protein oral nutritional supplement\(s\)](#)), the MMP is currently unable to identify preferred high-protein ONS.

The MMP recommends that high-protein ONS be added to List B (non-preferred ONS). The scope of the reimbursement application system in place for non first-line standard ONS should be broadened to include high-protein ONS, which will require prior approval for reimbursement under Community Drug Schemes.

The HSE is carefully considering the recommendations of the MMP under Section 20 of the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013. The HSE PCRS have written to the relevant nutritional companies regarding the proposal and have provided them with the right to make representations. The period for representations has now closed and written submissions are under consideration. The HSE will carefully consider any representations made.

At present, a decision has not been made by the HSE under Section 20\* of the 2013 Act.

**\* Conditional Supply of Listed Items**

*20. — (1) The Executive may attach conditions to the supply or reimbursement, under section 59 of the Act of 1970, of listed items (including classes of listed items) in the interests of one or more of the following:*

- (a) patient safety;*
- (b) cost-effectiveness;*
- (c) maximising appropriate use of the listed items concerned;*
- (d) appropriately applying the resources available to the Executive.*

*(2) Without prejudice to the generality of the Executive's power under subsection (1) to attach conditions to the supply or reimbursement, under section 59 of the Act of 1970, of listed items (including classes of listed items), such conditions may include one or more of the following:*

- (a) protocols for the supply of the listed items;*
- (b) the quantity of listed items which may be supplied or reimbursed, or both, during a specified period, in respect of a patient or a class of patients, or both, or in respect of patients in general;*
- (c) the period during which listed items may be supplied or reimbursed, or both;*
- (d) restrictions on the purposes for which listed items may be supplied;*
- (e) restrictions on the classes of prescribers who may prescribe the listed items;*

*(f) restrictions on the classes of patients who may be supplied with, or reimbursed under that section for, the listed items.*

*(3) The Executive shall, as soon as is practicable after the commencement of this section, establish and keep under review procedures designed to ensure that listed items are supplied or reimbursed, under section 59 of the Act of 1970, only if the conditions (if any) attached under this section to such supply or reimbursement, as the case may be, are complied with.*

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)**