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Ryan O'Meara, T.D.
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

23rd June 2025

PQ: 32817/25

To ask the Minister for Health if the drug, victoza, also known as liraglutide, is available under the drugs payment scheme (DPS) for patients who have had it prescribed for weight loss; if not, whether there are alternatives available under the DPS that a patient may instead discuss with their GP; and if she will make a statement on the matter. -Ryan O'Meara

Dear Deputy O'Meara,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 32817/25), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Liraglutide (Victoza®) 6mg/ml solution for injection in pre-filled pen is licensed for the treatment of 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). Therefore, these products are not reimbursed under the Drugs Payment Scheme (DPS) and are confined to those persons with full GMS and LTI (Diabetes Mellitus) eligibility. Victoza® (liraglutide) is not reimbursed under Community Drug Schemes for the treatment of weight management.

Liraglutide (Saxenda®) 6 mg/ml solution for injection in pre-filled pen is available for reimbursement under the Community Drug Schemes (specifically the Drugs Payment and General Medical Services Schemes) since 1st January 2023 for the treatment of weight management.

In line with the HSE reimbursement approval above, the HSE Medicines Management Programme (MMP) developed a Managed Access Protocol (MAP) for liraglutide (Saxenda®) as an adjunct to a reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity for weight management in adult patients, with an initial BMI of ≥ 35 kg/m² with prediabetes and high-risk for cardiovascular disease.

This MAP outlines the criteria that must be satisfied in order for a patient to be recommended for reimbursement of liraglutide (Saxenda®); further information is available on the MMP website <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/cspd/ncps/medicines-management/managed-access-protocols/liraglutide-saxenda-/liraglutide-saxenda.html>.

As outlined in this MAP, and in line with the reimbursement recommendation, reimbursement is supported for the following subgroup of the licensed population:

- Age 18 - 74 years
- BMI \geq 35 kg/m²

Confirmation of:

- Participation in non-pharmacological interventions which includes a reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity e.g. HSE Diabetes Prevention Programme.
- Diagnosis of prediabetes - fasting plasma glucose level between 5.5 - 6.9 mmol/L and Haemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) level between 42 - 47 mmol/mol.
- High-risk for cardiovascular disease – either a total fasting cholesterol level $>$ 5 mmol/L, or mean systolic blood pressure $>$ 140 mmHg

Clinicians are required to submit an application for reimbursement support of liraglutide (Saxenda®) for their patients through an online application system. Applications are reviewed by the MMP on a case-by-case basis, and a reimbursement recommendation is communicated back to the clinician or further information may be requested if required.

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



28th February 2024

Circular 002/24

RE: Reimbursement of Glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonists

Dear Pharmacist,

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). Therefore, these products are not reimbursed under the Drugs Payment Scheme (DPS) and are confined to those persons with full GMS and LTI (Diabetes Mellitus) eligibility.

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.

Liraglutide (Saxenda®) 6 mg/ml solution for injection in pre-filled pen is the only product currently approved under Community Drug Schemes (GMS/DPS) for weight management with a managed access system in place as outlined in Circular 002/23.

Prescriptions for Liraglutide (Victoza®) at doses in excess of 1.8 mg are outside the licensed indication and are not reimbursed under Community Drug Schemes.

Reimbursement support from the HSE is available for the licensed indication and approved dosages only (see table below). To manage the supply of these products, **reimbursement support for lower strength pen presentations to make up a dose is not approved** under Community Drug Schemes or any other HSE arrangement. However, the facility is available to pharmacies for 13 dispensing's in a rolling 12 months to accommodate the shortfall.

GLP-1 receptor agonists under Community Drug Schemes for approved licensed use				
Item	Strength	Formulation	Maximum monthly Pack	Scheme
Ozempic® (semaglutide)	0.25MG	SOLN/INJ PFP	1 (1 pen, 4 needles)	GMS, LTI



Ozempic® (semaglutide)	0.5MG	SOLN/INJ PFP	1 (1 pen, 4 needles)	GMS, LTI
Ozempic® (semaglutide)	1MG	SOLN/INJ PFP	1 (1 pen, 4 needles)	GMS, LTI
Trulicity® (dulaglutide)	0.75MG	SOLN/INJ PFP	1 (contains 4 pens)	GMS, LTI
Trulicity® (dulaglutide)	1.5MG	SOLN/INJ PFP	1 (contains 4 pens)	GMS, LTI
Victoza® (liraglutide)	6MG/ML	SOLN/INJ PFP	1 (containing 2 or 3 pens)	GMS, LTI
Saxenda® (liraglutide)	6MG/ML	SOLN/INJ PFP	1 (contains 5 pens)	GMS, DPS

Yours faithfully,

Shaun Flanagan
Assistant National Director
Primary Care Reimbursement Service