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

8th October 2025

PQ: 48972/25

To ask the Minister for Health to provide an update on moving the refund process of the drugs payment scheme from paper based to digital; 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 48972/25), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The HSE has electronic claiming processes in place which enable pharmacies to submit claims in relation to services provided to patients whose family monthly medicines requirements exceed the Drugs Payment Scheme monthly threshold (currently €80).

Those systems have supported the submission of more than 12 million Drugs Payment Scheme (DPS) claim items in the year to the end of August 2025. In such circumstances the family pays the first €80 of the claim and the pharmacy submits the entire DPS record to the HSE at month end and the HSE pays the balance of the claim to the pharmacy on the basis of the prices approved for medicines on the list of reimbursable items and the fees set out in legislation. DPS refund applications do not arise in such circumstances.

Patients registered under the Drug Payment Scheme can apply for a Drug Payment Scheme refund where they opted to use more than one pharmacy to supply their family medicines needs or they received items from their community pharmacy and other approved services provided by a supplier other than a community pharmacy e.g. Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) or Oxygen treatment and in total have paid in excess of the Drugs Payment Scheme monthly co-payment amount for the month.

The HSE Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS) is committed to continuously improving its services and recognises that the provision of digital services offer significant advantages both for patients and the

HSE. The HSE PCRS is in the early stages of developing an easy to use online refund application with upload capabilities to support the delivery of refunds by electronic fund transfer. It is anticipated that the detailed design of this new online service will be progressed in 2026. This is one of a number of ICT initiatives that the HSE PCRS is working on for 2026.

The HSE PCRS has over the last decade introduced a range of digital platforms to enable patients and clients to apply for eligibility to schemes digitally and also to enable contractors to engage digitally e.g. the medical card online application system, the DPS online application system, the EHIC online application system, an online Dental system, an online Optical system and an online system to assist in the management of Free Contraception Claims have all been introduced or enhanced over the last decade.

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