



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Seirbhís Aisíoca Príomhchúraim  
Bealach amach 5 an M50  
An Bóthar Thuaidh  
Fionnghlas  
Baile Átha Cliath 11

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Circular 008/12

12 July 2012

Dear Doctor,

You will be only too aware of the great pressures that have been placed on health and social services by the national financial position and the consequent challenges presented to all of us to continue to deliver the range of services with a reduced budget.

In order to ensure that we avoid the more stringent constraints imposed in other jurisdictions e.g. caps on monies available for pharmaceuticals; we must make immediate improvements in the efficient management of medicines expenditure.

It is in this context, that I am seeking your assistance in ensuring that your prescribing behaviour is as cost effective as possible in the months ahead.

You will be aware legislation to deal with the pricing and supply of medical goods will shortly be introduced by the Government. This legislation will provide for, amongst other elements, reference pricing. In the interim, the HSE asks that you prescribe generically where possible. You are also asked to avoid those medicines which are recognised as less suitable for prescribing. To assist you in this regard, the HSE is making available to GPs, through the PCRS Online Applications Suite, an analysis of your individual prescribing.

Accessing this service:

1. You will see a total figure deliverable if you prescribe less expensive substitutes on the medical card scheme based on the latest month.
2. You will be able to drill down the information provided to the individual product.
3. You will be able to examine by 'Classification', Classes such as Cardiovascular, Alimentary etc. We suggest that you review your choice of Statins and Proton Pump Inhibitors in the first instance as they offer the most opportunity for prescribing efficiencies in your therapeutic choices.
4. You will be able to examine, by patient, the products prescribed per month.

At this point in time, you are offered the most cost effective generic substitute available in the most recent update of the PCRS database; however, the tool will be further developed in the future to offer a 'programme preferred' choice i.e. a therapeutic alternative.

The HSE also seeks your assistance in ensuring that avoidable wastage of medicines is reduced by confirming with patients prior to prescribing, that the patient does require further supplies. In the case of 'prn' medicines, checking if the patient needs further supplies may avoid such medicines building up in the home. In order to reinforce this message, the HSE has developed a poster for display in GP practices and Community Pharmacies, which is enclosed with this letter.

In cases of poor compliance with prescribed medication, compliance should be emphasised or the medication ceased. A reduction in the expenditure of medicines will provide the State with resources to sustain essential health services e.g. hospital services, etc.

As the State works its way out of the current economic crisis, it behoves every citizen who has the opportunity to reduce health expenditure without impacting on patient care, to play their part.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Burke', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Patrick Burke  
Primary Care Reimbursement Service