



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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

Health Service Executive
Primary Care Reimbursement Service
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Circular 011/14

12 March 2014

Dear Doctor;

The HSE has been receiving complaints from the general public, which indicate that some GMS contract holding General Practitioners are charging their medical card/GP visit card patients for routine phlebotomy services. These are cases where the samples are taken in the GP's practice as part of the investigation and necessary treatment of patients' symptoms or conditions.

In the interest of clarification on this matter, I wish to advise you that where the practice based phlebotomy service forms part of the investigation and necessary treatment of a patient's symptoms or conditions by the patient's GP, the service should be provided free of charge where the patient is a Medical Card or GP Visit Card holder. General Practitioners cannot charge eligible patients for these phlebotomy services.

It is the General Practitioner's contracted responsibility to provide proper and necessary treatment to eligible persons. If part of that proper and necessary treatment (as referred to above) includes phlebotomy, the GP must provide that service free of charge. The fact that phlebotomy services may be available in other care settings does not empower the General Practitioner to charge patients for the taking of blood in order to diagnose or monitor their condition.

Any instances of eligible patients, who by definition are deemed to be unable to arrange general practitioner services for themselves and their dependants, without incurring undue hardship, being requested to pay for a routine service of this nature from their own limited resources is viewed as a serious matter by the HSE.

The HSE will fully investigate any reported incidents of eligible patients being charged for this service. Any instances of either (a) a Medical Card or (b) a GP Visit Card holder being charged for the taking of blood will result in the PCRS making a full refund to the patient with a corresponding deduction being made from the routine payments to the General Practitioners concerned. These deductions will be communicated to you and reported transparently on your monthly payment listing.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Burke'.

Patrick Burke
Primary Care Reimbursement Service