



Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2021

Circular Number: NCO-11-2021/2022

### Support for General Practitioner Services during Current National Public Health Emergency

Dear Doctor,

I refer to previous communications in relation to a range of supports for General Practitioner services during the current National Public Health Emergency and to the GP Agreement 2019.

#### 1. GP Agreement 2019

In line with the provisions of the GP Agreement 2019 the Minister for Health, with the agreement of the Minister for PER has approved the next payment arrangements for GPs under the Agreement. Revised capitation payments will be implemented in line with the Agreement, effective from the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2022.

In line with the Agreement, the roll out of a range of productivity measures will continue to be progressed during 2022 and beyond, including the implementation of new arrangements for community healthcare networks, the eHealth agenda, and the medicine management programme. In this regard, the HSE will continue to work closely with the IMO in preparation for the roll out of these initiatives and a range of information sessions and guidance material will be provided in the New Year as part of the implementation process.

#### 2. Winter Plan – Covid 19 GP Winter Supports

As part of the collaborative process with General Practice on the pandemic through the CCO Forum, funding was included in the 2021/22 Winter Plan for additional service supports over the period November 2021 to March 2022, for GMS GPs who are participating in the Accelerated Covid Booster Programme. Details of the Winter Support Grant are set out below.

##### 2.1 Winter Plan – Support Grant

###### Who is Eligible to Receive the Grant?

The Covid 19 GP Winter Support Grant will be available to each GMS GP with a GMS panel size in excess of 100 (i.e. medical card, GP Visit Card and Under 6 combined) who is participating in the Accelerated Covid Booster Programme.

The grant is available to all eligible GMS GPs as follows:

Panels between 101 and 500	€2,500
Panels between 501 and 1000	€3,500
Panels of 1001 plus	€4,500

Please note the above amounts will be based on actual panel size and not weighted panel size and will be paid as one lump sum during the month of February, 2022.



### **What Can the Grant Be Used For?**

It is recognised that GPs have increased hours for existing staff and in many cases required staff to work overtime hours and/or brought in additional temporary staff. The grant is to make a contribution towards the additional costs associated with the increased hours of the existing staff as well as temporary recruitment of additional staff, e.g. GP locums, practice nursing, practice management, secretarial and admin as well as therapy support staff. The grant also covers contributions to cost of additional training or ICT enablement of the practice staff and systems.

### **Relevant Time Period**

The grant is a winter grant and will cover the period November 2021 to March 2022.

It is recognised that significant and unprecedented additional pressures are being placed on the healthcare system generally and General Practitioner services in particular due to the demands of the pandemic and the winter season combined. In this context, bespoke arrangements are being put in place to ensure appropriate accountability for disbursement of the Winter Support Grant while also minimising the administrative burden on GP practices during this public health emergency.

GPs will provide evidence of qualifying costs incurred by them to the National Contracts Office by way of a certified memo from their accountant (to be provided no later than the end of April 2022) to provide assurance that the grant was expended in line with this circular. In order to provide consistency a standard format will be provided early in new year. Each grant recipient will be required to submit separate individual certification. In the case of a grant recipient who is in a two doctor or multi doctor group practice, while each qualifying GP is required to submit his/her individual certification, the same cost(s) can only be submitted once. GP practices should also keep a record of relevant costs.

I should also point out that GMS GPs who received a 2020/21 Winter Support Grant must have submitted a certified memo from their accountant for this grant before they can receive payment in respect of the 2021/22 grant.

I would like once again to express my sincere gratitude to General Practitioners and their teams for their efforts to- date and for the patient centred approach in which they have organised their services in response to this public health emergency.

Please be assured of the HSE's continued support at this time and I wish you, your colleagues and your families a peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Pat Healy'.

**Pat Healy**  
**National Director**  
**Clinical Programme Implementation & Professional Development**