



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Seirbhís Aisíoca Príomhchúraim
Bealach amach 5 an M50
An Bóthar Thuaidh
Fionnghlas
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8th July 2011

Medical Card Centralisation

Dear Primary Care Contractor,

Please find attached, for your information, a note on Medical Card Centralisation, along with some details of our Online Medical Card Services.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick Burke
Primary Care Reimbursement Service

Health Service Executive - Information Note July 2011

Medical Card Centralisation

The centralisation of Medical Cards is moving ahead with many benefits accruing in the final phase, e.g. improved customer service, which will provide more clarity to all concerned (Patients, GP's, Pharmacists, Public Representatives etc.).

There has been considerable co-operation with the project and we will continue to work with all stakeholders to address all issues pro actively.

From July 2011, all new Medical Card applications nationally will be processed through the Central Office at PCRS in Finglas. From that date, the Central Office will deal with all new Medical Card applications, reviews and changes to client information and eligibility.

The HSE is committed to ensuring that the changeover takes place smoothly and that clients continue to be supported in getting any information or support they may require. Queries and requests for general information on the Medical Card Scheme, assistance with completing an application form, and updates on the processing of a clients application will continue to be dealt with by staff in the Local Health Office after the changeover date.

Local Health Offices have access to the national Medical Card IT system which allows staff to track the current status of applications and reviews being processed by the central office. This will provide information to ensure that queries received locally from all clients, whether they have applied locally or to the central office, can be responded to by the Local Health office team.

Any representations on behalf of a patient or any information request on the status of a Medical Card Application or Review can be made to the Local Health Office, or directly to the central HSE office in Finglas. A set of Frequently Asked Questions is available from Local Health Offices. These FAQ's provide information on most issues. This information will be updated as required, and we will continue to keep you updated as the project progresses.

Completed Medical Card/GP Visit Card applications should now be returned to:-

**CLIENT REGISTRATION UNIT,
P.O. BOX 11745
FINGLAS,
DUBLIN 11.**

Lo Call No: - 1890 25 29 19

For further details please contact your Local Health Office.

Online Medical Card Service

www.medicalcard.ie

The HSE Central Medical Card Office at PCRS operates an online service that enables people, anywhere in the country, to apply for a medical card online. People are also invited to complete their medical card reviews online. The online service works extremely well for the thousands of people who choose to use it each month.

The online service is suitable for people who are likely to qualify for a medical card on income grounds. Online assessments are immediate and for applicants who are eligible on income grounds, medical card delivery is guaranteed within 15 days of receipt of the completed application pack. People who are over the income limits (i.e. Discretionary Cases) are informed immediately and may apply to the HSE for assessment in the normal way, if they wish.

For the first time in the health service, in many cases, the Medical Card assessment process is immediate and documentation is only required in cases when the medical card is being issued. The online service avoids the need for people to submit documentation unnecessarily, i.e. when a card is not being issued.

The online application works better for people because;

1. Eligible applicants are guaranteed to get a medical card quickly
2. The online form helps people to submit a correct application so they can avail of the 15 day guarantee
3. If a person is not eligible on income grounds, completion of an online application determines this immediately, and we provide the person with a written assessment of the application within fifteen days.

The steps are;

1. Fill in the online form. (Help prompts are available on every field. Only fields required to be completed are presented in many cases).
2. At the end of the process an application pack is presented to the successful applicant. Print the application pack, sign and return it to the address provided, including any documents required
3. **That's it.** On receipt of your completed pack and documents the HSE does the rest and provides progress updates from receipt through card issue (where mobile numbers are provided).

The online application process determines if a person is eligible on the basis of an assessment of their income and relevant outgoings. If an applicant is over the income guidelines they know immediately and the HSE sends them written confirmation showing the assessment, based on the details they have provided. The person may still be eligible on a discretionary basis, and should make an application in the normal way.

A separate online application is available to people under 70 years of age and people aged 70 years and over.

It is important to reiterate that at all times a person can seek advice from his or her Local Health Office.

This initiative, along with the other initiatives put in place as part of the centralisation of Medical Card Application Processing, provides a number of significant benefits to the public:

1. Applications for medical cards are processed in 15 days – down from the current 12 to 16 weeks.
2. The cost of the Medical Card Scheme is reduced by more than €10 million a year, which is made available for frontline services.
3. All applications are assessed using a uniform and consistent process, which ensures appropriate expenditure of taxpayer funding.
4. Staff in Local Health Offices has more time and resources to meet pressing front line service needs e.g. Primary Care Team support.
5. Other HSE services, e.g. Paramedic services, Public Health Nursing Departments, Doctor on Call services, Hospitals etc. are also in a position to determine the eligibility of a client for services by accessing the national online system provided by the Central Office in PCRS.

This is an exciting initiative and we look forward to continuing to develop and enhance customer focused services, and providing modern state of the art services in tandem with local support services to ensure that everyone can access and maintain their entitlements in a customer friendly and timely fashion.

July 2011