



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

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

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Health Service Executive  
Primary Care Reimbursement Service  
Exit 5 , M50  
North Road  
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Dublin 11

Ph: (01) 864 7100  
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Circular No. 002/11

13<sup>th</sup> January 2011

Dear Pharmacist,

The HSE has reached agreement with the Irish Pharmacy Union on a protocol for managing incomplete claims (copy enclosed). We look forward to working with Pharmacists over the coming months to reduce the level of incomplete claims to the minimum consistent with immediate patient need.

Your monthly itemised listing will highlight claims which fall under the protocol. For the avoidance of any confusion claims which do not fall under the protocol and which cannot be reimbursed will be detailed on your monthly listing with a specific message in the normal way.

The HSE will implement the agreed protocol with effect from January 2011 claims. We will report thereafter on a monthly basis alerting you to the individual cases which fall under the protocol.

### **Reporting of Incomplete Claims**

In line with the protocol, all such claims are paid while your percentage of incomplete claims continues to decrease. The HSE will report each incomplete claim on your Itemised Claim Listing each month with a description of the claim. This will alert you when the eligibility/identity of a patient on a claim is not clear.

Incomplete claims will be listed twice on each Itemised Claim Listing under (i) GMS claims (which will have been paid) and (ii) Incomplete Claims Listing.

Progress on reducing such claims will be monitored on an ongoing basis at an individual Pharmacy level. It is anticipated that reporting in this manner will help Pharmacists in their endeavours to reduce the level of such claims. Local Health Offices will be asked to play their part in assisting patients as appropriate. Pharmacists are asked to alert the patient to the issue and to hand a pre-prepared letter to the patient when they visit the Pharmacy advising them of the problem with their registration details. Copies of the letter are enclosed and a PDF version is also available which can be downloaded from the **Pharmacy Section of Online Services** at [www.pcrs.ie](http://www.pcrs.ie) .

We will also report these claims on your listing for November and December 2010 so that you will be aware of the patients that fall into this group prior to the implementation date in January 2011.

The HSE reserves the right to request from patients, confirmation of any item supplied or not supplied by their pharmacy.

The HSE will also be writing to GPs asking them to ensure that prescriptions written by them contain all of the required patient information including the patient's medical card number.

Your cooperation in this matter is much appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Patrick Burke', with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Patrick Burke  
Primary Care Reimbursement Service

# **Protocol on Incomplete Claims agreed between the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU)**

## **1. Objectives of the Protocol**

This protocol has been agreed between the Irish Pharmacy Union and the Health Service Executive Primary Care Reimbursement Service – HSE (PCRS) - to provide a solution to the issue of incomplete claims, which will ensure that -

- eligible Medical Card holders have access to drugs and medicines without disruption
- pharmacists have certainty about payment for services provided to eligible patients, and
- the accountability responsibilities of the HSE are fully addressed.

This protocol has been put in place following a series of meetings and correspondence between the parties on how this ongoing problem might be resolved.

This protocol will provide a basis for pharmacists to work with the HSE (PCRS) in the discharge of their obligations to patients as well as fulfilling the accountability requirements in relation to public expenditure. Both parties are committed to continuing to work together to ensure that this protocol is satisfactorily implemented.

## **2. Incomplete Claims**

In order to deliver on the objectives of this protocol, the following procedures have been agreed -

- The HSE will work with other healthcare professionals to ensure that the majority of prescriptions being presented at pharmacies contain accurate patient and other details
- While the HSE has responsibility for determining the eligibility of all patients, the pharmacy contract provides that,

*“The pharmacy contractor shall supply, with reasonable promptness, to –*

*a) any GMS eligible person, or other person authorised to act on his/her behalf, who presents a properly completed prescription form signed by a practitioner.”*

- Notwithstanding the foregoing, where a prescription claim is presented to the HSE (PCRS) and they are not satisfied as to the accuracy of the details on the form, the HSE will pay the claim and notify the pharmacist that the eligibility or identity of the patient is not clear
- The claim in question will be reported on the Pharmacy’s Detailed Payment Listing so that the pharmacist is alerted to the fact that the eligibility or identity of the patient is not clear
- The HSE (PCRS) will also provide a generic “Dear Medical Card Holder” letter for the pharmacist to hand to each individual patient or their carer when they next visit the pharmacy to advise them of the position

- The pharmacist will then alert the patient to the need to regularise their medical card registration in order to continue to access the item(s) under the Medical Card Scheme and advise them to contact the local HSE office to resolve the matter when the patient or their agent next visits the pharmacy
- The patient will be assisted to do this by the HSE Local Health Office and the HSE (PCRS) and where necessary the HSE, will write directly to the patient
- The HSE (PCRS) will also alert the general practitioner to the need to regularise the patients medical card registration and also ask them to advise the patient when they next visit the surgery to contact the local HSE office or HSE (PCRS)
- The HSE will ensure that its administration and records are kept up to date on a timely basis and that there is consistency of administration, records and procedures across all parts of the HSE
- The HSE (PCRS) will continue to reimburse a pharmacist up to protocol end date so long as their overall percentage is decreasing progressively
- Progress towards the resolution of inaccurate claims will be monitored monthly on a pharmacy by pharmacy basis and reported to them
- Progress will also be reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Joint Consultative Group to ensure that the number of incomplete claims is decreasing month by month in such a way as to be substantially reduced by the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011 and to take whatever other agreed action may be necessary to achieve the objectives of this protocol
- This protocol will continue to apply to pharmacists who are endeavouring to assist the HSE (PCRS) in resolving these claims in accordance with the terms set out in this protocol.

### **3. Existing Unpaid Claims**

Taking cognisance of the period of time that has elapsed since the HSE began withholding payments, and recognising that pharmacists first concern is the well being of their patients, the HSE will pay all outstanding claims with immediate effect with a view to having all such claims paid with the October payments.

The HSE will take a balanced and pragmatic approach to resolving claims once there is a reasonable effort being made on the part of pharmacists to co-operate with the HSE in resolving matters. For its part, the Union will encourage members to implement the agreed terms of this protocol.

**30 September 2010**



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January 2011

### **Your Medical Card Eligibility Needs to Be Reviewed**

Dear Medical Card Holder,

Products dispensed under the Medical Card Scheme can only be provided to you when you hold a valid, in-date, Medical Card. This letter alerts you to the fact that your Medical Card eligibility may need to be reviewed.

**If you hold a valid, in-date, Medical Card you should present the card to your pharmacy on your next visit so that you can continue to access your medicine under the Medical Card Scheme. You can check your eligibility status online at [www.medicalcard.ie](http://www.medicalcard.ie) or by calling us on Lo-Call 1890 252 919**

If you do not hold a valid, in-date, Medical Card, you should discuss your Medical Card eligibility with your Local Health Office or call us on Lo-Call 1890 252 919. You may simply need to order a reprint of a card if you have Medical Card eligibility. Alternatively, you may need to complete a review of your eligibility or submit a Medical Card application form.

If you are no longer eligible for a Medical Card, you may need to access your products under the Drugs Payment Scheme (DPS), which will cap the amount of money you would pay each month to your pharmacy for approved medicines. DPS Application forms are available from your Local Health Office who will assist you with any queries you may have on the Drugs Payment Scheme.

Other than prescription charges which may properly arise, you can avoid paying unnecessarily for your products by having your Medical Card eligibility established.

Yours faithfully,

Patrick Burke  
Primary Care Reimbursement Service