



Violet Anne-Wynne, T.D.  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

12<sup>th</sup> October, 2020

PQ: 26749/20

**To ask the Minister for Health the reason the only treatment for persons with dry age-related macular degeneration disease, macushield, is not covered by the medical card reimbursement scheme in view of the fact that this mainly effects older persons; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Violet-Anne Wynne.**

Dear Deputy Wynne,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 26749/20), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Macushield products are not on the Reimbursement List seamlessly available to persons with GMS eligibility. However, Macushield and similar products were historically available in many areas to Medical Card Holders under Discretionary Hardship Arrangements.

In developing a national framework for the administration of Discretionary Hardship Arrangements (effective 1 March 2016), an instruction that no new patients were to be approved for such products was issued to the local offices by the National Director for Primary Care.

In 2016, the HSE Medicines Management Programme (MMP) were asked to review the available therapeutic evidence for supporting through Discretionary Hardship Arrangements Macushield and similar products. In light of the MMP published report, the HSE decided to cease reimbursement support for these products for all patients to include those previously approved.

Suzanne Doyle  
Primary Care Eligibility & Reimbursement Service

**The Health Service Executive operates the General Medical Services Scheme, which includes Medical Cards and GP Visit Cards, under the Health Act 1970, as amended. It has established a dedicated contact service for members of the Oireachtas specifically for queries relating to the status of Medical Cards and GP Visit Cards applications, which the Deputy / Senator may wish to use for an earlier response. Tel: 01-8647180 / email: [Oireachtas.pcrs@hse.ie](mailto:Oireachtas.pcrs@hse.ie)**