



**National Schemes and Reimbursement Service**  
Room 138, Dr. Steevens' Hospital,  
Dublin 8.  
D08 W2A8

18<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Mr Matt Carthy TD,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 13944/24 To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 61 of 14 February 2024, the assistance available to Irish citizens who require repatriation via air ambulance; and if he will make a statement on the matter**

Dear Deputy Carthy,

Thank you for your parliamentary question referenced above, which has been forwarded to me for direct reply.

The HSE make available European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) cards to applicants, which enable them to receive free or reduced cost healthcare when travelling in Europe. The HSE and the Department of Foreign Affairs highly recommend that individuals travelling outside the State take out appropriate travel insurance. They should ensure that this travel insurance provides for the costs associated with repatriation, including via air ambulance, if necessary.

Where an individual falls ill or is injured whilst abroad within the EU, EEA, the UK or Switzerland, pursuant to EU Regulation 883/2004 the individual may rely on their European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) to cover the cost of any emergency care. An individual using an EHIC, within EU, EEA, the UK or Switzerland, is also entitled to access an entire episode of care abroad from admission to discharge.

An EHIC does not cover the cost of a person's repatriation or amended travel arrangements to return to Ireland. There is no legal framework in place for the HSE to provide funding for an individual and/or their families where an individual falls ill or is injured abroad and they require air ambulance repatriation. Departmental assistance may be provided on a case by case basis.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Walsh".

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**David Walsh**  
National Director  
National Schemes & Reimbursement