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Leo Varadkar, T.D.
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

20th May 2024

PQ: 21281/24

To ask the Minister for Health the estimated average or median cost of a GP visit card per person per annum; the cost of a full medical per person per annum; and to provide a detailed explanation of the difference in cost, given the abolition of in-patient hospital charges and the reduction in the household cap on monthly medicine bills.-Leo Varadkar

Dear Deputy Varadkar,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 21281/24), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

- **the estimated average or median cost of a GP visit card per person per annum; the cost of a full medical per person per annum**

The annual average cost of a Medical Card and a G.P. Visit Card is dependent on the age cohort of the individual.

The costs range from €326p.a. to €2,606p.a. for a Medical Card and from €175p.a. to €768p.a. for a G.P. Visit Card

Please see the table below which provides further breakdown of the costs.

Age Cohort	Medical Card				GP Visit Card			
	Pharmacy	GP	Other	Total Cost	Pharmacy	GP	Other	Total Cost
0 - 4 Yrs	€197	€195	€17	€409	€0	€196	€16	€212
5 - 15 Yrs	€188	€123	€15	€326	€0	€159	€15	€175
16 - 44 Yrs	€567	€202	€61	€830	€2	€200	€15	€218
45 - 64 Yrs	€1,147	€341	€98	€1,586	€2	€318	€23	€343
65 - 69 Yrs	€1,537	€395	€115	€2,047	€8	€375	€25	€408
Aged 70 and over	€1,734	€741	€131	€2,606	€2	€715	€51	€768

- **and to provide a detailed explanation of the difference in cost**

The key differences in costs between a Medical Card and a G.P. Visit card is as follows:-

Once eligibility for a Medical Card is confirmed, an eligible person is entitled to receive certain Doctor, Dentist, Clinical Dental Technician, Optometrist and Ophthalmologist treatments/services free of charge and prescribed medicines from Pharmacists subject to being charged a prescription charge by the Community Pharmacy.

(For information purposes:- Since the November 2020, the prescription charge is €1.50 for each item that is dispensed up to a maximum of €15 per month per person or family. For people aged 70 or over the prescription charge is €1.00 per item up to a maximum of €10 per month per person or family).

Persons who do not meet the eligibility criteria for a Medical Card but who meet the criteria for a General Practitioner Visit Card (GPVC) receive free access to GP services only.

- **given the abolition of in-patient hospital charges**

Irrelevant for PCRS /Primary Care related charges

- **the reduction in the household cap on monthly medicine bills**

The current threshold in the Drug Payments Scheme is €80 per family unit per month.

Spend in this scheme is linked to the movement in the number of persons with medical card eligibility under the GMS scheme. Those patients that are no longer eligible for a medical card and are currently spending over €80 per month for drugs can avail of the Drugs Payment Scheme.

Please note the PCRS can only provide details on the costs of a medical card and / or GP visit card which it covers i.e. "The table above provides details on the average cost to the Primary Care Reimbursement Service of provided eligibility for GP Visit Card and Medical Cards. It does not include the costs of any services or items provided in Health Regions and it does not capture the financial costs to the State of any non-health state benefit of a Medical Card."

Yours sincerely,



Suzanne Doyle
Primary Care 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