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Deputy Neasa Hourigan  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

30<sup>th</sup> May 2024

***PQ 21924/24 - To ask the Minister for Health the status of the HSE review of national guidelines for daily car parking rates in acute hospitals; whether a working group has been established; the timelines associated with this review process; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - Neasa Hourigan***

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Hospitals currently charging car parking fees are very cognisant of the financial implications of these parking costs for patients and their families, particularly for those with long-term and chronic illnesses. Consequently, many hospitals have introduced a maximum daily fixed parking charge and reduced rates and/or concessions for patients with long-term and chronic illnesses inclusive of their families and visitors, for whom this payment of the full rate would cause hardship.

The provision of parking concessions to patients and families and the implementation of a maximum daily charge were recommendations of the 2018 Hospital Car Parking Review.

In February 2023, the HSE established that out of 44 hospital-controlled car parks that provide patient parking 28 (64%) provide concessions and 8 (18%) provide free parking. In summary 82% of acute hospitals either provide concessions or free parking.

The criteria for the granting of concessions vary from hospital to hospital depending on the nature of the care being provided. These include;

- Oncology patients
- Dialysis patients
- Families of deceased
- End of Life/Palliative care
- Patients/Families under financial strain

Ensuring the fair allocation of concessions and the provision of information to patients is a challenge for hospitals. As a result, how the process is overseen and how information is made available differs from hospital to hospital.

The HSE guidance in relation to parking charges is currently in development. It will provide guidance to hospitals regarding the provision of information in relation to concessions that are available locally in hospital sites, and is aimed to create consistent, fair, and transparent parking policies across all acute hospitals, reducing variability and promoting equity for patients, staff, and visitors.



The HSE guidance has outlined a series of recommendations to guide work and ensure consistent outcomes across the HSE's acute hospital network, these include:

- Encouraging acute hospitals to develop a local policy and procedure for parking charges.
- Communicating Parking Information and ensuring hospital parking information, including concessions, complaints, and appeals procedures, are well-publicised on hospital websites, patient letters, at admission procedures and other relevant communication channels.
- Determine rationale and/or obstacles to implementing recommendations.

The planned working group to implement this guidance was proposed to be directed from the HSE corporate centre. The ongoing programme of change within the HSE has established six Regional Executive Officers to lead the six new health regions that are central to this programme of change. Under the new structure, the health regions will direct operations and each region has its own leadership team and responsibility for local decision-making. The HSE guidance and recommendations for establishing local parking policy is currently under review as part of this current period of transition to the regional health areas.

I trust this is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nessa Lynch', written over a light-colored rectangular background.

**Nessa Lynch**  
**General Manager**  
**Acute Operations**