



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte, Seirbhís Aisíocaíochta Cúraim Phríomhúil
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Health Service Executive, Primary Care Reimbursement Service
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Francis Noel Duffy, T.D.
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

19th November 2024

PQ: 43963/24:

To ask the Minister for Health the reason a medication (details supplied) is excluded from the drugs payment scheme if it is a necessary medication for children and people diagnosed with autism suffering with sleeplessness; if this medication will be considered under the Drugs Payment Scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Francis Noel Duffy

Details Supplied:

Melatonin

Dear Deputy Duffy,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 43963/24), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Medicines are added to the formal Reimbursement List following detailed assessments which include assessment of the clinical evidence, the economic evidence and the budget impact of a decision to reimburse specific indications of a medicine. The Primary Care Reimbursement Service is required to reimburse in line with approved decisions of the HSE and the HSE is required to formally assess each medicines and each specific use of such medicines before reimbursing them.

Melatonin has never been available through the formal Reimbursement List for reimbursement under Community Drug Schemes (including the Drugs Payment Scheme). Under the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013, products that are licensed will undergo a pricing and reimbursement approval process by the National Centre for Pharmacoeconomics (NCPE) on receipt of an application by the HSE from the Marketing Authorisation Holder. Melatonin (Circadin®) underwent a review in 2008 and reimbursement was not recommended by the NCPE as there is currently insufficient evidence to support the reimbursement of this product under the Community Drugs Schemes (available at <http://www.ncpe.ie/drugs/melatonin-circadin/>).

The HSE Corporate Pharmaceutical Unit received an application for pricing and reimbursement of Melatonin (Slenyto® Prolonged-Release Tablets) on 3rd July 2019 from Flynn Pharma for the treatment of insomnia in children and adolescents aged 2-18 with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and / or Smith-Magenis syndrome, where sleep hygiene measures have been insufficient. The first step in the process is the submission of a rapid review dossier (a clinical and economic dossier) to the National Centre for Pharmacoeconomics (NCPE) for assessment. The rapid review was commissioned on 5th July 2022 and completed by the NCPE on 9th August 2022. The rapid review outcome recommends that a full Health Technology Assessment (HTA) is recommended to assess the clinical effectiveness and cost effectiveness of prolonged release melatonin (Slenyto®) compared to the current standard of care. However, to date the company have not made a HTA submission to the NCPE for assessment.

The position remains that a submission of a completed HTA dossier to the NCPE is required to progress this application, as per the formal processes governing the pricing and reimbursement of medicines.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Suzanne Doyle', written in black ink.

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