Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte, Seirbhís Aisíocaíochta Cúraim Phríomhúil
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Baile Átha Cliath 11, D11 XKF3
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Health Service Executive, Primary Care Reimbursement Service
Exit 5, M50, North Road, Finglas,
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Paul McAuliffe, T.D.
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

5th February 2025

PQ: 46539/24

To ask the Minister for Health the HSEs position on paxlovid and to provide an explanation. -Paul McAuliffe

Dear Deputy McAuliffe,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 46539/24), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The HSE is committed to providing access to as many medicines as possible, in as timely a fashion as possible, from the resources available (provided) to it.

The HSE robustly assesses applications for pricing and reimbursement to make sure that it can stretch available resources as far as possible and to deliver the best value in relation to each medicine and ultimately more medicines to Irish citizens and patients.

HSE decisions on which medicines are reimbursed by the taxpayer are made on objective, scientific and economic grounds.

There are formal processes which govern applications for the pricing and reimbursement of medicines, and new uses of existing medicines, to be funded and / or reimbursed.

The HSE considers the following criteria prior to making any decision on pricing / reimbursement in line with the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013:
(1) The health needs of the public,
(2) The cost effectiveness of meeting health needs by supplying the item concerned rather than providing other health services,
(3) The availability and suitability of items for supply or reimbursement,

(4) The proposed costs, benefits, and risks of the item or listed item relative to therapeutically similar items or listed items provided in other health service settings and the level of certainty in relation to the evidence of those costs, benefits and risks,
(5) The potential or actual budget impact of the item or listed item,
(6) The clinical need for the item or listed item,
(7) The appropriate level of clinical supervision required in relation to the item to ensure patient safety,
(8) The efficacy (performance in trial), effectiveness (performance in real situations) and added therapeutic benefit against existing standards of treatment (how much better it treats a condition than existing therapies) and
(9) The resources available to the HSE

In terms of the specific details of the application for pricing and reimbursement of Nirmatrelvir + Ritonavir (Paxlovid®):

From the 1st February 2025, Nirmatrelvir + Ritonavir (Paxlovid®) has been added to the list of items which are reimbursable under the General Medical Services and Community Drug Schemes for the treatment of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in adults who do not require supplemental oxygen and who are at increased risk for progressing to severe COVID-19. Specifically, treatment should be reimbursed in limited circumstances for selected seriously immunocompromised COVID-19 patients within the licensed indication.

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