



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta Straiteis Pobail agus Pleanála  
Ospidéal Dr. Steevens , BAC 8, D08 W2A8

Office of National Director Community Strategy and Planning  
HSE, Dr Steevens Hospital, Dublin 8. D08 W2A8

**Date:** 17th June, 2020

**Circular Number:** NCO-07-2020

### **Support for General Practitioner Services During Current National Public Health Emergency**

Dear Doctor,

I refer to the supports for general practitioner services during current National Public Health Emergency implemented in March 2020 (ref. Circular NCO-05-2020) which in line with the March agreement were recently reviewed. I am writing to advise that the Minister for Health, with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform has approved the payment for a further period a range of the Special Fee payments to general practitioners put in place from 16<sup>th</sup> March last. The approval is for the extension until 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020 of the following:

- The payment of €30 for a COVID– related remote consultation for all patients;
- The payment of €75 for COVID-related respiratory clinics for all patients where clinically necessary; and
- The payment of €25 for non-COVID remote consultations with patients who hold a medical or a GP visit care in order to determine the need for attendance at a GP surgery.

The payment of claims for consultations made during extended hours at the higher rate of €41.63 will end from 11:59 pm on Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

Consultations have also been held and agreement reached with the IMO on a range of other issues including Out of Hours (OOHs) and Chronic Disease Management (CDM) which has informed the Ministers' approach to these issues. The approval for continued payment on the basis described above is informed by an expectation that the GP OOHs Service will continue to operate on the same basis as present, that arrangements will be put in place for GP referral for COVID testing OOHs without any additional fee being payable, and that the modified approach to CDM will also be progressed quickly in line with the proposals submitted to the DoH. The HSE will communicate separately with the OOHs services in the normal way and further correspondence will issue over the coming short period with regard to the CDM Programme.

The details of these arrangements are outlined hereunder and I would draw your attention in particular to the revised claiming deadlines:

1. GPs will continue to be remunerated for provision of remote consultations to patients who may have contracted COVID-19 infection including referral for testing if clinically required in line with the latest clinical algorithm which is available on [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie) . A fee of €30 will be payable to GPs for provision of such remote consultations. **This fee will be payable in respect of all patients, regardless of eligibility status.** A claim is valid once a call has been completed whether or not the test is required. If a test is required the result will be referred back to GP and where a second remote consultation is required with the patient a further claim can be made in respect of the provision of such second consultation to that patient. Claims can be submitted electronically to the HSE's PCERS using the standard Special Items of Service claim form. Claims must be submitted within 14 working days of the consultation, with the date of consultation being day 1. The code to be used for these claims is **CB**.
2. GPs will be enabled to provide dedicated respiratory clinics on their practice premises for patients previously identified by remote consultation as being at-risk of COVID-19 infection. A fee of €75 will be paid per consultation. **This fee will apply, to all patients who attend a dedicated respiratory clinic at your practice, regardless of eligibility status.** Claims can be submitted electronically to the HSE's PCERS using the standard Special Items of Service claim form. Claims must be submitted within 14 working days of the consultation, with the date of consultation being day 1. The code to be used for these claims is **CA**. It is not expected that multiple claims for CA consultations in respect of individual patients would be a feature of any individual set of claims.
3. In order to maintain services for non-COVID-19 issues, a fee of €25 will be payable to GPs for a remote consultation, not related to COVID-19, with one of their GMS patients to establish a clinical need for attendance at the practice premises. **This fee will apply to a remote consultation with a holder of a Medical Card or GP Visit Card** and will apply whether or not the Out of Hours service is available at the time the consultation is provided. Claims can be submitted electronically to the HSE's PCERS using the standard Special Items of Service claim form. Claims must be submitted within 14 working days of the consultation, with the date of consultation being day 1. The code to be used for these claims is **CD**.

Where possible it would be appreciated if claims outstanding in relation to consultations between the 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 and the 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 could be submitted by the 30<sup>th</sup> of June.

The approval for continued payment is on the basis that the payments set out 1 to 3 above will not continue after 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2020.

These fees arrangements do not, and are not intended to, set a precedent in relation to remuneration of general practitioners for any service on behalf of the HSE. Insofar as the COVID-19 related supports are concerned, the HSE through the discharge of its standard accountability and probity assurance obligations, will endeavor to ensure that payments are targeted upon such cases and not beyond what is clinically warranted and I am asking that you would be mindful of these considerations.

It is agreed that following the introduction of these fees, General Practitioners will not make any charge on patients for any element of consultation, in person or remotely, relating to the diagnosis and/or treatment of COVID-19, where such diagnosis and/or treatment is clinically necessary.

GPs who do not hold a GMS or other health sector contract with the HSE may also claim these fees and should contact the HSE's National Contracts Office at **044 9395519** or by email at **natcontractsoffice@hse.ie** for further information.

I would like once again to express my sincere gratitude to General Practitioners and their teams for their efforts to- date and for the patient centred approach in which they have organised their services in response to this public health emergency. Our focus now collectively is to ensure that patients return to attending their GP and practice's in a timely manner, for their health advice and care, so that symptoms are not left untreated.

Please be assured of the HSE's continued support at this time.

**Yours sincerely,**



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**Pat Healy,  
National Director,  
Community Strategy and Planning.**