

# Circular 1/95: Arrangements for the Provision of Services Under Section 58 of the Health Act, 1970

**Title: Arrangements for the provision of services under section 58 of the Health Act, 1970**

**Keywords:** general practice development fund, drug targets, superannuation of dispensing fees, research and education, liaison with GP Units

**Date: 20 January 1995**

**Document Type: Circular 1/95**

**From: Department of Health, Ireland**

**To: Each Health Board Chief Executive Officer**

**Re: Arrangements for the provision of services under section 58 of the Health Act, 1970**

Dear Chief Executive Officer,

I am directed by the Minister for Health to inform you that an agreement has been reached with the Irish Medical Organisation on arrangements for the provision of services under Section 58 of the Health Act, 1970. In accordance with paragraph 41 of the schedule to the existing Form of Agreement for the provision of such services, the terms of this agreement shall be incorporated into existing contracts with effect from 1 January, 1995. The full text of the GMS Review Agreement is enclosed with this Circular.

It will be noted that these arrangements will be subject to review on a periodic basis by agreement between the Minister and the Irish Medical Organisation. In this connection, it has been agreed that Management and the Irish Medical Organisation will meet on a quarterly basis to deal with issues of concern to either side in relation to the operation of the Agreement and other matters relating to the development of general practice.

## **General Practice Development Fund**

All parties accept the importance of ensuring that appropriate accountability arrangements are in place in respect of the General Practice Development Fund. It has been agreed that Management and the Irish Medical Organisation will co-operate in the preparation of a report which will outline the service improvements which have been introduced in 1993 and 1994 arising from the provision of this fund. As a first step in this process each board is requested to forward to the Department a report of service developments in its functional area in respect of the years 1993 and 1994. Your board's report should cover detailed improvements under the following headings:

- provision of realistic rostering and out of hours arrangements
- practice maintenance, equipment and development
- employment of secretaries and nurses.

The report should also include details of actual expenditure and developments supported by the Board's proportion of the £3.5m development fund which was made available during 1994 (this element of the report has already been furnished in relation to 1993). Each board is requested to furnish the report by 20 February, 1995 at the latest.

Additionally, the agreement also requires each health board's General Practice Unit to prepare a quarterly report which will contain an evaluation of the manner in which the development fund is

being utilised. The initial report should cover the first two quarters of 1995 and will be expected to be received in the Department by 21 July, 1995.

Approval has been notified to the General Medical Services Payments Board to make the appropriate adjustment to payments under the development fund with effect from 1 January, 1995 as provided for in the Agreement.

### **Drug Targets**

An explanatory note on the methodology for the calculation of Drug Targets in 1995 is at Appendix 1 to the Agreement. The GMS Payments Board will shortly be issuing targets to individual doctors based on the new methodology. A meeting of all General Practice Units to discuss the drug targets and related issues has been arranged by the GMS Payments Board for 2 February next. As part of the Agreement, the Irish Medical Organisation will be embarking on an intensive nationwide campaign aimed at encouraging all doctors to participate positively in the indicative drug target scheme.

### **Superannuation of dispensing fees**

The GMS Payments Board has been notified of approval to superannuate dispensing fees of participating doctors with effect from 1 January, 1995.

### **Research and Education**

A General Practice Research and Education Fund has been established as set out in the Agreement and the GMS Payments Board has been advised to make the necessary deductions from drug target savings i.e. 1% from the health boards' proportion of the savings and 1% from the general practitioners' proportion of the savings. Further discussions will be held with the nominated representatives of the Chief Executive Officers in relation to the establishment of an appropriate structure to administer this fund.

### **Liaison with GP Units**

During the course of the Review concern was expressed as to the effectiveness of liaison arrangements at local level between GP Units and local representatives of the Irish Medical Organisation and the Irish College of General Practitioners. Management undertook to take specific measures at local level to improve such liaison. In this connection the Department should be advised of the nature of the arrangements in place to meet this objective.

### **Entry to the GMS, Special Leave, Study Leave**

A separate Circular will issue shortly on each of these items to reflect the requirements of the Agreement.

### **Framework to address implications of Health Strategy for general practice**

The Department will be in touch with the nominated representatives of the Chief Executive Officers regarding the establishment of a framework to deal with the implementation of the Health Strategy as it relates to general practice.

Yours sincerely

Tom Mooney

Assistant Secretary

20 January, 1995