

Circular 1/93: 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

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From: Department of Health, Ireland

To: The Chief Executive Officer, Each Health Board

Re: Arrangements for the Provision of services under Section 58 of the Health Act, 1970.

Dear Chief Executive Officer,

An Agreement has been reached between the Minister for Health and the Irish Medical Organisation on the 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, 1993. An integral feature of the Agreement reached is that there will be full commitment by all parties to the future development of general practice as outlined in the Blueprint Document "The Future of General Practice in Ireland" and that all parties are committed to the achievement of responsible and cost effective prescribing. In recognition of such a commitment, the Government have agreed to the establishment of a fund out of which specific payments will be made for developments in general practice. Details of this fund are outlined in Appendix 1 of this Circular.

1. Agreement between Minister for Health and Irish Medical Organisation.

(i) Duration of Agreement

The duration of the agreement will be for two years commencing on 1 January, 1993. The arrangements for the provision of services under Section 58 of the Health Act, 1970, will be subject to a review to commence not later than 1 July, 1994. This review is to be completed not later than 30 November, 1994.

(ii) Terms of Agreement

- implementation in full of the 17.5% increase recommended by the Arbitrator in 1992 in addition to any general pay round increases;

- provision of a total GMS drugs budget for 1993 and 1994 which would take account of the normal trends in expenditure over the past three years. (See also Appendix 1 to this Circular);

- the allocation of an individual annual drug target for each general practitioner to enable him/her to better pursue the objective of responsible and cost effective prescribing (See also Appendix 1 to this Circular);

- subject to the provisions regarding special arrangements which have been entered into between health boards and general practitioners, rentals of health premises to be waived with effect from 1st January, 1993;

- payments to be made to doctors in respect of special items of service, as detailed in the existing contract, provided to GMS patients not on the doctor's panel.

2. Other Matters.

Further Circulars will be issued in the near future regarding, inter alia, the establishment of General Practice Units, the Right of Entry to the G.M.S., sessional rates for general practitioners and payments in respect of the treatment of E.C. visitors.

Yours sincerely

Gerry McCartney

Assistant Secretary

APPENDIX 1

1. Fund for the development of general practice.

In recognition of the commitment of general practitioners in the G.M.S. to the development of general practice, the Government have agreed to establish a fund of £12.5m in 1993 out of which specific payments would be made for developments in line with the Blueprint Document "The Future of General Practice in Ireland", including a core payment of £7m which would be recurring in 1994. Annual payments from this fund would be regarded as an investment to be recouped as savings materialise. The amount of fund will be the first commitment to be met from the overall G.M.S. drugs budget in 1993 and 1994.

2. Apportionment of the £12.5 million fund.

The fund of £12.5 will be invested as follows:

(a) £4.5m to be paid from January 1993 on a per capita basis up to a maximum panel size of 1,500* to all doctors, as an additional allowance for the provision of realistic rostering and out of hours arrangements. These payments will be made on a monthly basis based on the panel sizes the end of each quarter. Arising from these payments each general practitioner will be required to notify his/her local health board of the arrangements that are in place. Such arrangements will be subject to on-going review during the period of the contract;

(b) £3m to be paid on a monthly basis from January 1993 on a per capita basis up to a maximum panel size of 1,500* to all doctors towards practice maintenance, equipment and development. A Health Board will be entitled to satisfy itself that practice premises meet the criteria laid down in the GMS contract;

(c) £1.5m to be paid from January 1993, pro rata to existing payments as a supplementary grant to those GPs who employ secretaries and/or nurses;

* (In the case of group practices the aggregate number of patients in the practice will be used to determine payment).

(d) £3.5m for the specific developments outlined in the Blueprint Document including the establishment of national and regional General Practice Units.

These developments will take account of local and national priorities as determined by the Department of Health and by individual health boards and will include, where appropriate, arrangements for improved care of the elderly, terminally ill and young children in special circumstances.