

COVID-19 Update to Members

27 May 2020

Medical e-certification during Covid-19

Introduction

The facility for GPs to certify illness periods for patients and send electronically to the DEASP is available on all Clanwilliam GP softwares. E-certification is the most efficient method for GPs submitting certificates of incapacity for work in cases where patients contact practices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

E-certification for Illness and Injury Benefit

E-certification involves medical certificates for Illness Benefit and Occupational Injury Benefit being sent electronically from GP software systems via Healthlink to the Department. Using E-certification, the GP creates the e-certificate via its practice management system and submits the E-certificate to DEASP via Healthlink. This is available for both MED1 and MED2 certificates

Assessment for illness and injury benefit should follow the guidelines outlined in [Closed Certification Guidelines for General Practitioners](#). GPs should consider whether an appropriate assessment can be undertaken remotely using telephone or video consultation, during the COVID-19 pandemic. This will depend on the nature of the complaint, the quality of the information available to the GP and a risk/benefit assessment of the need to request the patient to attend the surgery in person. The normal responsibilities of the GP as a certifier continue to apply.

Covid-19 Illness Benefit

There are specific rules around this available at [Illness Benefit for Covid-19 absences](#)

ICD 10 codes for related illnesses are as follows
COVID-19 [corona virus] confirmed = U07.1
COVID-19 [corona virus] self isolated = Z29.0

For an initial Illness Benefit claim, it is necessary for patients to complete an IB1 form. To avoid unnecessary footfall through GPs surgeries, patients can apply for an IB1 through the following sources

Phone: [\(01\)7043300](tel:017043300), [Locall-\(1890\)928400](tel:1890928400)

Email: illnessbenefit@welfare.ie

Address: Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, PO Box 1650, Dublin

Further guidance and support on e-certification is available from:

Socrates

[Socrates e-Cert Quick Guide](#)

[E-cert Socrates Webinar](#)

HPM

[HPM Release notes \(look for version 3.6.4\)](#)

[e-Cert HPM webinar](#)

HealthOne

[HealthOne User Guides](#)

[HealthOne Video Tutorial](#)

DEASP Support

<u>Name</u>	<u>e-mail:</u>	<u>Telephone:</u>
Fiona Whelan	fiona.whelan@welfare.ie	(01) 6732303
Alan Kearns	alan.kearns@welfare.ie	(01) 6732367

Practice Management Software (Technical Support)

<u>System</u>	<u>e-mail:</u>	<u>Telephone:</u>
Socrates	support@clanwilliamhealth.com	(071) 9193600
HealthOne & HPM	gpsupport@clanwilliamhealth.com	(01) 4633098
Complete GP	support@completegp.ie	(01) 2150292

FAQs (from DEASP update on e-certification)

1. What is e-certification?

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) Illness Benefit schemes are social insurance based schemes which pay people who are unfit for work. The illness is certified by General Practitioners (GPs) who are members of the Department's panel of medical certifiers. This certification currently comprises a paper process — you will be familiar with the Certificate of Incapacity for Work (MED1) and the Certificate of Ongoing Incapacity for Work (MED2). An e-Certification application has been developed to facilitate the creation and submission of MED1 and MED2 certificates electronically

2. How are you introducing e-Certification?

The introduction of e-Certification will see medical certificates for Illness Benefit and Occupational Injury Benefit being created and sent electronically from a range of GP practice management systems via the HSE National Healthlink Secure Messaging Service and delivered to the Department for scheme processing.

3. What are the benefits of e-Certification?

e-Certification will help to cut down on paperwork for GPs, while also improving the Department's service to the patient as the e-Cert will be processed quickly, thus eliminating certification delays when compared with the traditional paper posting method

4. Who can certify the patient by e-certification?

As currently, the GP who carries out the assessment must complete the patient's e-Cert.

5. How do I know if the Department has received my patient's cert?

The e-Certification application will display a "received" message for the certificate. You should check the status of the certificates you have entered under the "Cert Tracking" option

6. How do I deal with rejection messages?

a. *No Record found with the Personal Public Service Number (PPSN) and Date of Birth (DOB) you have for the patient.*

■ Clarify and confirm PPSN and DOB details with the patient. If the rejection message persists the GP can issue a paper certificate.

b. *No matching ICD 10 code found:*

■ Contact your software provider's helpline (details above).

c. *No Medical Certifier found for Panel Number*

■ GP should confirm the number in use is not the GMS or IMC number. If the issue persists, the GP should call the Medical Review and Assessment Service (MRAS) Helpdesk 01-6732350 or email gpqueries@welfare.ie.

d. *Cert already exists for PPSN with supplied dates:*

■ As a medical certificate already exists covering this period of time there is no need for the GP to submit another certificate unless the dates have been entered incorrectly in which case the dates should be amended as appropriate.

7. **What happens if my Wi-Fi/ Healthlink is down?**

GP can give the patient a paper MED1 or MED2 cert

8. **What if the patients need the certificate for their employer?**

The MED1 and MED2 certs are for Social Welfare use only. The patient may be given a white script for their employer, or if they require both, the e-Certification application has the facility to print a version for the employer

9. **I've entered an e-Cert on the system and it's gone through, but then I realised that I'd meant to enter different details, e.g. an earlier "certified from" date than the one I inputted earlier — can I go back and amend this?**

No. If an e-Cert has gone through, it cannot be amended. You need to submit a second e-Cert with the correct details. In this case, there's no need for a second patient assessment. The customer will receive the benefit of the new information i.e. if an earlier "Certified from" date is inputted onto the new e-Cert, this is the date from which the claim will run.

If you inadvertently enter a "Certified to date" that is later than you intend, do not enter a second e-Cert but instead ask the patient to contact Illness Benefit at 01-7043300 or e-mail illnessbenefit@welfare.ie to advise of the correct duration as Illness Benefit will need to shorten the claim duration manually.

10. **When I'm certifying a patient, can I enter a specific "Certified to date" of incapacity, or do I have to just go with the dropdown options of one, two, three weeks, etc.?**

You should make your medical assessment of the patient, under the agreed closed certification guidelines, i.e. one MEDI cert for the whole anticipated duration of illness. You can choose to input a specific "Certified to date" of incapacity under the agreed closed certification guidelines by clicking in the space under the "From date" or by clicking on the dropdown arrow and selecting the Custom Date option and choose a date from the calendar that pops up.

11. What is the "Is final" box on the certificate, and when should I tick it?

You should make your medical assessment of the patient, under the agreed closed certification guidelines, i.e. one MED1 cert for the whole anticipated duration of illness. If the patient has, for example, Gastroenteritis and you have an expectation that he/she will be fit to resume work in say two weeks, you would certify a MED1 e-Cert for two weeks and tick the "Is final" box (the same process applies when completing the paper version of the MED1). Ticking "Is final" will ensure that the claim closes on time after the two weeks have elapsed. However if this box is not ticked, there's a danger that the claim will remain unclosed for longer than is desirable.

If the patient does not resume work and has not recovered sufficiently after the two weeks have elapsed, you can complete a second MED1 e-Cert with a "From date" of the day after the first claim has elapsed (this will attach to the original claim as a task to re-start payment for the customer). There is no need for the patient to complete another IB1 booklet.

To re-cap, tick the MED1 "Is final" box when you have an expectation that the patient will resume work on the date in question. If you are unsure about whether or not the patient will be fit to resume work at the end of the MED1 closed certification period, do not tick the "Is final" box. For patients who you feel will be unfit for work long-term. i.e. more than six months into the future, again do not tick the "Is final" box, but instead certify them forward from the time of initial assessment until such time as you feel they have recovered.

For MED2 certs, i.e. patients who have been put onto a monthly, three monthly or six monthly certificate by the Department, the same principle applies to the "Is final" box, i.e. only tick it when you have an expectation that the patient will resume work on the date in question.

Separate to the points above, a customer/patient can also request to close their claim (e.g. if they intend to resume work at an earlier date than they're currently certified to) by e-mailing closemyibclaim@welfare.ie or by telephoning Illness Benefit Support on 01-7043300