



Tel: (061) 483277

Fax: (061) 483211

MID-WESTERN
HEALTH BOARD

Date 16th March, 2004.

To: Cathaoirleach & Each Member
Mid-Western Health Board

Report No: 18/04
Item No 6 on Agenda

Report for Meeting of the Board to be held on Monday 5th April, 2004.

Nursing Home Subvention – Enhanced Subvention

Dear Member,

As you are aware the Board initiated an Enhanced Subvention in August, 2002.

This was based on the Report brought to the Board in July, 2002 which based the Scheme on the following powers, principles and guidelines.

Discretionary Powers

The Board has discretionary powers under Article 10.6 of the Nursing Home Subvention Regulations to make enhanced subvention payments or to contract beds under Articles 22.3 and 22.4. However the extent to which the Board can invoke these articles is dependent on budgetary constraints and funding provided by the Department of Health and Children. (If, under Section 31 of the Health Act, 1970 (No. 1 of 1970), the Minister specifies a limit on the expenditure to be incurred in providing services under the Act, a Board may, in respect of persons qualifying for a subvention after the date on which the limitation on expenditure is specified, pay such amounts as would enable the Board to contain its expenditure within the specified limit (Article 20 of S.I. 227/93).

Principle of Scheme

The Board will invoke its discretionary power, subject to budget availability, where it is satisfied that a person is unable to meet regular Nursing Home Care costs and that hardship now exists. The funding available will be pre-determined on an annual basis. The following principles will apply:

- As the Nursing Home Subvention Scheme is a demand-led scheme, the Board must be in a position to meet its legal obligation to pay the basic subvention rate to all qualified applicants. This may have the effect on limiting the amount of discretionary funds available to the Board to pay enhanced subvention and hence reduce the number of subventees that can be assisted under the discretionary scheme in any particular year. The extent of enhancement will be reviewed at the commencement of each year.
- Should there be an acute increase in basic subvention, the Board may be obliged to convert discretionary funds to meet future budgetary increases on the basic subvention rate. This would be done on a uniform manner across all subventees.

Guidelines applied in Scheme

- The Board must be advised that a person is experiencing difficulties in meeting nursing home fees
- The application can be made by the subventee, next of kin or proprietor of the nursing home
- The application must outline the financial reasons for the application and the nursing home fees applicable (in this regard a copy of the most recent invoice should be attached)
- The subventee must be in receipt of a regular subvention for 3 months before an enhanced subvention is considered
- On receipt of an application on hardship grounds, the file will be re-examined to check:
 - If all financial information contained therein is up to date (if not, subventee will be requested to submit current details on income/savings/property/assets)
 - If a recent dependency review as carried out from a medical/social perspective (if not, same to be reconsidered)

- An enhanced subvention will not normally be granted if an individual has a property/family residence. It is only in exceptional circumstances that an increase in subvention would be approved. Each case will be separately examined in this regard.
- Enhanced subventions will be considered for all dependency categories (medium, high, maximum). However medium cases will be critically reviewed to consider alternative options, i.e. further support in the community, should the subventee/family wish to consider same.
- The option to transfer a subventee to an extended care bed may be considered, where applicable when available.

Having reviewed the Board's commitments from a budgetary perspective, taking cognisance of funding from the Department of Health and reviewing first 12 months of enhanced subvention payments, the Board is now in a position to increase its financial support to subventees (who are not in a position to meet nursing home fees) from €35 per week to €50 per week.

This continues to be a limited scheme and it is calculated at present demand levels to increase costs by approximately €300,000 per year.

It is proposed to implement this enhancement of the scheme from the beginning of May and the Board will contact all the Nursing Home proprietors to commence the process.

Yours sincerely,

James Conway
Assistant CEO