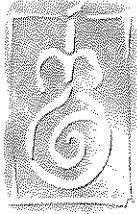


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Mr Paddy Burke
Primary Care Reimbursement Service
Exit 5, M50
North Road
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Dublin 11

24 June 2011

Re: Letter issued to GPs relating to the provision of Phlebotomy Services

Dear Mr Burke,

I refer to your letter dated 21 June 2011 issued to GPs in relation to the provision of routine phlebotomy services

I wish to record that it is the IMO view that General Practitioners have no contractual obligation under the GMS Contract to provide Routine Phlebotomy Services to GMS patients. While many GPs have delivered this service on a *pro bono* basis to GMS patients in the past we understand from our members that given the financial constraints upon GP practices GPs will have to examine all areas of practice given the increasing financial pressures on General Practice at this time. This has been notified to the Department of Health & Children in 2009 and 2010 the IMO Submissions on the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act. This was not a matter of dispute between the parties and we therefore strongly reject any suggestion that GPs are acting outside of the terms of the GMS Contract.

Such services are available free of charge within the secondary care setting and GMS patients are entitled to receive free phlebotomy services in that setting and are informed of their entitlements in this regard. Should patients choose to avail of the services within the GP practice it is treated as a private consultation for the purpose of the provision of services outside their entitlements under the terms of the GMS Contract.

I would draw your attention to the fact that the taking of Routine blood samples and provision of a Phlebotomy Service while involving an investigative process does not form part of a patient's treatment and quite clearly is not countenanced by paragraph 11 of the GMS Agreement. We wish to clarify that we do accept that in particular circumstances the taking of particular blood tests (as distinct from routine testing) may form part of the treatment of a patient (for example when taking a blood sample for a patient to check for diabetes or on an urgent basis) However this is very different from the provision of routine blood samples in the context of a Routine Phlebotomy Service.

CEARDCHUMANN
DOCHTÚIRÍ na hÉIREANN


CHIEF EXECUTIVE
George F. McNeice, B.A.

In the circumstances you might please confirm that where GPs adhere to the terms of the GMS Contract they will not be the subject of investigations as indicated in your letter.

I would draw your attention to the IMO letter of 19 April 2011 to the Minister for Health which set out the IMO position in this regard.

I trust this clarifies the position and wish to confirm this clarification will be provided to all IMO members.

Yours sincerely,



Eric Young

Assistant Director, Industrial Relations

