



Member Updates May 2019

Ex Gratia Scheme

- Letters and consent forms were mailed to members on Tuesday, May 7th.
- Amount of award is determined by the Independent Assessment Panel, not the HSE or DoH, and is therefore not included in this communication.
- Accepting the award will not prevent members from bringing a claim to the High Court or the Tribunal.

Tribunal

- The Tribunal is optional and will provide interested individuals with a private channel to have their claim heard as compared to the public High Court system.
- Bill for the establishment of the Tribunal has been approved by government and is available on the 221+ private portal.
- Next step is legislative approval, which the Taoiseach has committed for the spring session.
- 221+ continues to call publicly for the implementation of the Tribunal as soon as possible.

Reimbursement for Independent Review of Slides

- A request for reimbursement of the cost of having slides reviewed by an outside lab was made by patient representatives at the CervicalCheck Steering Committee.
- The issue was raised recently at a private meeting with the Taoiseach, who agreed members should not bear this financial burden.
- Follow-up letters documenting this conversation have been sent and 221+ will continue to press the issue as a priority advocacy issue.

RCOG Independent Review

- 63% of women consented to be involved and reviews have begun.
- The process is expected to take at least 6 months to complete.
- Patient representatives plan to receive a more detailed update regarding the progress and timeline when RCOG representatives attend the next CervicalCheck Steering Committee meeting on May 16th.

Scally Report Update

- Dr Scally issued an implementation progress report on the status of all 50 recommendations earlier this year and it can be found on the 221+ private portal.
- An expected follow-up report examining issues surrounding laboratory quality and the tender process is expected this month and will be posted to the 221+ private portal when published.

Smear Testing Backlog

- Smear tests currently are being reported between 2 and 33 weeks from the time the sample is obtained. Over 50% are averaging 7 weeks.
- HSE has announced it has sourced additional international capacity and is working to finalize contracts and quality assurance checks.
- Slides for women attending colposcopy will receive priority as they are in a high risk group.
- Labs with the highest backlogs will carry out HPV testing first as a means of triaging more urgent reviews for cytology.

Surrogacy & HSE Package of Supports

- 221+ has employed outside expert counsel regarding the status of the Assisted Human Reproduction & Surrogacy Bill and the ability of the government to reimburse expenses for members through the HSE Package of Supports for costs associated with surrogacy.
- A document outlining the costs for surrogacy abroad and the government's current and active role in facilitating these arrangements in Ireland has been drafted. A letter requesting this financial support be provided to members will be mailed with the document to both the Minister for Health and the Taoiseach next week.

Lymphoedema Services

- A new model of care for lymphoedema services in Ireland has been approved and can be found on the 221+ private portal.
- Patient representatives have been liaising with the project lead to ensure services are rolled out in a fashion that best supports our members.
- 221+ is also working with the DoH to agree an efficient process for members interested in being evaluated and referred for surgical intervention through the Treatment Abroad Scheme.

Mediation with Joint Medical Bodies

- Patient representatives continue to work with the esteemed Turlough O'Donnell to engage in mediation with the Joint Medical Bodies (RCPI, RSCI, ICGP, and the Medical Council).
- The objectives are to open the lines of constructive communication, contribute to the development of a strong open disclosure policy, and build a culture of truly patient-centred care and respect.
- It is the strong feeling of the 221+ Steering Committee that women are entitled to be treated by a consultant whom they trust. For individuals interested in engaging in a dialogue with their consultant, we will be working to establish a process for this to happen in a safe and comfortable environment. For individuals whose relationship with their consultant has been irrevocably damaged, a process to facilitate a new referral will be pressed.

221+ Strategic Communications Plan

- An outside specialist has been providing valuable strategic communications support to help the group advocate for member needs and maintain a voice in key issues.
- This work has included establishing stakeholder priorities, generating and responding to media requests, and drafting press releases.
- Next steps include social media tracking and small group member forums to be held around the country to provide everyone with the opportunity to share their experiences, express their concerns and frustration, and identify goals for the future.