

March 2020

Welcome to our 2020 MPF Newsletter, where we share with you all relevant information about your MPF Membership for the forthcoming year.

Fund Update

At the 2019 AGM, the Trustees asked me to give a briefing on some of the issues facing the Fund. As we commence 2020 there are many significant issues facing the Fund. These issues have not appeared overnight and have been briefed at previous AGMs and communicated regularly in MPF newsletters. The issues are serious but not insurmountable. The Trustees recognise the issues and are currently in the middle of a body of work to address them.

Commencing last year, the Trustees have carried out 5 full day workshops with more to come. The purpose of these workshops is to address the long-term viability of the fund, to ensure that all our members continue to receive the treatment they require at the time they require it. The Trustees are working through some difficult and complex issues but are satisfied that given time they will come up with a long-term solution that will protect all our members and provide the necessary health insurance cover.

These workshops have looked at and will continue to look at many issues not least of which is the level of premia, how best and when to utilise the reserve to the benefit of all members, how to compete with other insurers and how to continue to provide a top-class service to all members.

To that end the Trustees will continue to delve deep into all these issues, will seek the advice from relevant advisers be they legal, financial, investments etc. The Trustees plan to continue this work over the coming months and bring their thoughts to conclusion as soon as possible.

The Trustees are cognisant that only a small number of members attend an AGM and so have decided to hold a number of meetings with members over the coming months to bring members up to date on the work they are doing and to ensure as many members as possible are aware of the issues. Two pilot meetings have already been held in Limerick and ESB Gateway. We are conscious that we have members in every county, but it is impossible to visit every town and village, so the Trustees have asked us to identify a number of locations which might work best. We will therefore in the coming months be advertising the times and locations for these meetings.

The fund has faced and continues to face challenges and I just want to finish by assuring you on behalf of the Trustees that over the coming months the Trustees will develop a plan outlining the long term future for the Fund to ensure that our members continue to receive the health cover you require and expect.

Subscription Rates

The issue of subscription rates continues to be a tricky one for all Health Insurance Schemes including ourselves. As you may have seen other insurers have raised prices twice or three times in the past 12 months. This is primarily because medical inflation continues to outstrip general inflation by approximately 5% per annum, increasing number of claims and the introduction of new high cost drugs. MPF is not immune to any of these factors but the Trustees are cognisant of their commitment to use the risk reserve prudently and judiciously to the benefit of all members. Based solely on projections for 2020 the increase that would need to be applied would be circa. 8%. However the Trustees cognisant of the impact such an increase would have on all members both young and old have decided to draw on the risk reserve and only increase premia by 1% from 1st April. In reaching this decision the Trustees also took into account the very good return achieved on our investments in 2019. This increase compares very favourably to what other providers are increasing premia by and it is the view of the Trustees that it is the minimum increase that could be applied without harming the longer-term viability of the fund.

To put this in context an adult member of the MPF Premium Plan (i.e. over 25 years of age) will be paying an extra €0.30 per week. For a child under 18 the increase in cost works out at €0.07 per week.

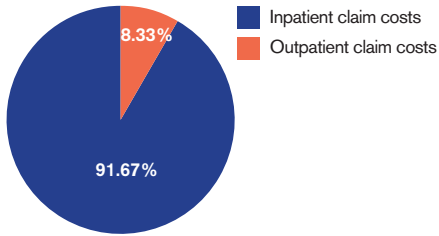
As well as limiting the price increase the Trustees despite the upward pressure on prices/claims took the decision to not amend the benefits currently on offer by MPF. The MPF Benefits & Subscription Rates booklet provides full details.

The trustees are heartened at the number of members exercising their rights to be treated as a public patient. The increase in this is also a reason that Trustees were able to limit potential increases and the Trustees would like to put on record their thanks to all members for their continued vigilance in exercising this right. Your continued vigilance is contributing to a stronger MPF.

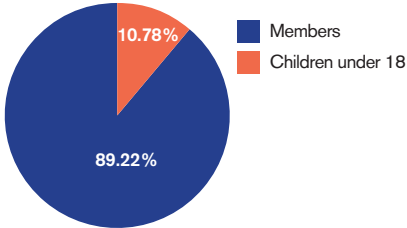
Know your Entitlements – Medical Card and GP Visit Cards

If you have a medical card or a GP visit card, you can receive certain health services free of charge. There are criteria attached to qualifying for a medical card but currently if you are a child under the age of 6 **or** in receipt of a Carer's Benefit or Carer's allowance or if you are aged over 70 you are entitled to a GP visit card. Further information can be found on www.hse.ie

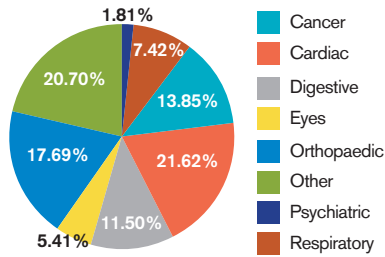
INPATIENT VERSUS OUTPATIENT COSTS 2019



TOTAL MEMBERSHIP 31 DECEMBER 2019 20,814



€41.2M SPEND BY ILLNESS



ADMISSION TO A PUBLIC HOSPITAL VIA A & E - Know Your Rights!

Do you know that by signing the Private Insurance Patient Form in this instance you are paying over 10 times more for the same service as someone who has no private health insurance? Same treatment, no additional services but MPF is charged €813 a day on your behalf instead of €80 a day (which is fully covered on your policy). Patients are being advised by the hospitals that the charge is fully covered by their insurers, and there will be no cost to them at all. But this is completely misleading, as you are paying for this indirectly through higher premiums. It is estimated this charge alone could be adding as much as 5pc a year to the cost of private health cover.

There is evidence that Public Hospitals are insisting that patients admitted through A&E departments must use their private health insurance. This is not correct or lawful. Please realise that you are under no obligation to sign this form. When you are asked to sign the form to switch to private patient status, you should ask what additional services are you going to receive. If you are being treated as a public patient, with no private or semi-private bed and no treatment from a consultant of your choice, then there is no benefit in signing this form. Know your rights – it is your choice.

If you require any further information or clarification on this matter please don't hesitate to contact the MPF office.

If you are admitted to a public hospital via A&E and you have private health insurance, you will be asked to sign a Private Insurance Patient Form. Here is what you need to know.

**Private Insurance Patient Form
To sign or not to sign**

The decision is yours, but what does it mean?



 If I **DO** sign the form

If I **DON'T** sign the form 

I receive a standard service



Same bed, same medical treatment and the same food

I receive a standard service



My insurer pays up to **€813** per night for my visit



My insurer pays **€80** per night for my visit



Total cost per 10-night stay: **€8,130**

All Irish residents are entitled to public healthcare at a charge of €80 per night



Total cost per 10-night stay: **€800**

THE IMPACT
INSURANCE PREMIUMS ARE RISING AS INSURERS HAVE TO PAY OUT MORE MONEY TO PUBLIC HOSPITALS FOR NO ADDITIONAL SERVICES