

Information Guide to Primary Care and Hospital Services

*For persons who contracted Hepatitis C through
administration within the State of contaminated blood
and blood products*

(Under the terms of the Health (Amendment) Act 1996)



Updated 2008

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Introduction

This is the second edition of the Information Guide to Services for persons who contracted Hepatitis C through the administration within the State of contaminated blood and blood products and who currently hold a Health (Amendment) Act (HAA) Card. The guide has been updated to take account of the changes, which have occurred over the last number of years, and to give further clarity on parts of the service where there have been improvements. The guide has been updated through consultation and with the help of the Hepatitis C Liaison Officers, patient support groups and the eight designated hospitals.

If you contracted Hepatitis C from the administration within the State of contaminated blood or blood products, you are entitled to a range of services including GP services, all prescribed drugs, medicines and appliances, dental and ophthalmic services, home support, home nursing, counselling services and other services without charge. These services are provided under the Health (Amendment) Act 1996. If you are eligible, the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer in your Health Service Executive (HSE) Area will arrange to issue you with a Health (Amendment) Act Card (HAA Card), which will make it easier for you to access these services. Eligibility for the HAA card is described on page 4.

As well as the type of services already mentioned, there are some hospitals that are specially funded by the Health Service Executive to look after your healthcare and the services covered in the hospital setting are covered in this guide also.

Details on hospital services and how to access them are given in chapter 2 of this guide, while information on the community based services are given in chapter 3. General information in relation to the Consultative Council on Hepatitis C, Support Groups and publications of interest are given in chapter 4. Lists of healthcare professionals who provide services in your HSE area are included in the back of this guide.

What is the HAA Card?

The HAA Card is given to men, women and children who contracted Hepatitis C from the administration within the State of contaminated blood or blood products. **It is *not* the same as a medical card, a GP visit card or a Drug Payment Scheme card.** The HAA Card gives entitlements to additional services, on more flexible terms and conditions than the medical card. The HAA card and the entitlements attached to it are for the *lifetime* of the cardholder. In addition, the HSE have discretion to take particular circumstances into account. The HAA Card is personal to the individual cardholder and does not cover family members (except in the case of access to counselling services, please refer to section on counselling on page 19). For this reason, it is important for existing medical cardholders with dependants to retain their medical card. It is also advisable for the same reason for existing GP visit and DPS cardholders to retain those also. Cardholders with private health insurance can also choose to retain this insurance for the same reason. If you already have private health insurance you might like to take into consideration that hospital and consultant services for eligible persons with Hepatitis C are available in **public hospital facilities** only (for more information on hospital services please refer to chapter 2 of this guide).

You should bring your HAA card with you when you are availing of services, as you might need to show it for identification purposes. It will also assist your healthcare professional in claiming payment from the HSE for any services provided.

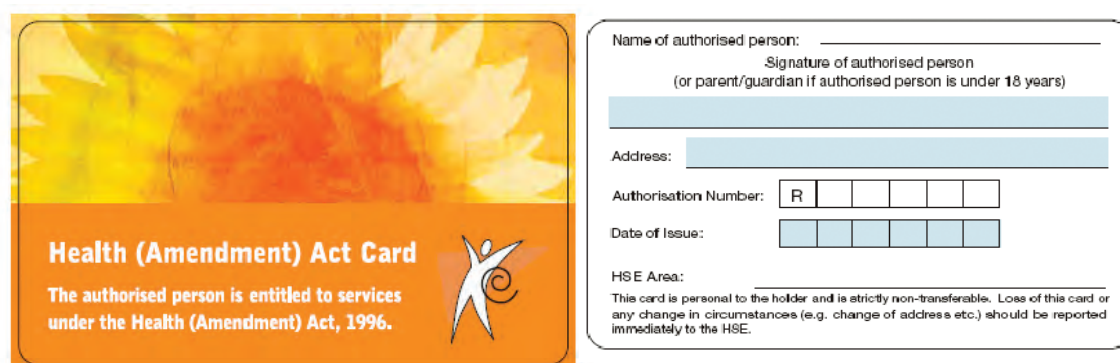
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If your healthcare professional has any difficulties or needs anything explained, they should contact the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer, who will be happy to assist. **You should not have to resolve any difficulties yourself or explain your entitlements to any healthcare professional and the HSE will make every effort to ensure that all HAA cardholders are afforded this courtesy.**

When you avail of the GP, dental, ophthalmic or pharmacy services to which you are entitled, the service provider generally sends the bill to the Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS) of the HSE. The PCRS operates on behalf of the HSE and its purpose is solely to act as a payments mechanism. The PCRS also pays service providers for a number of other health services schemes; because it has the computer systems and staff in place to process large numbers of payments to thousands of service providers every month, it is usually the preferred mechanism for payment in respect of routine services. For further information, please see the section in this Guide on Pharmacy Services on page 33.

What does the HAA card look like?

During 2007 the HAA card was re-launched in a different format to the blue card, which had been in circulation since 1996. You should have by now received your new card in the format below and for all new cards issued since AUGUST 2007 they will be the type below. The back of the card will include your name and a number, which is unique to you containing 6 digits beginning with the letter R. There is also room for your signature on the back of the card or in the case of a person under 18, their parent/guardian must sign.



The image shows the front and back of a Health (Amendment) Act Card. The front of the card is orange with a stylized sunburst graphic. It reads: "Health (Amendment) Act Card", "The authorised person is entitled to services under the Health (Amendment) Act, 1996.", and features a logo of a person with arms raised. The back of the card is white and contains a form with the following fields: "Name of authorised person:" followed by a line for a signature, "Address:" followed by a line, "Authorisation Number:" followed by a box containing 'R' and five empty boxes, "Date of Issue:" followed by five empty boxes, and "HSE Area:" followed by a line. A disclaimer at the bottom states: "This card is personal to the holder and is strictly non-transferable. Loss of this card or any change in circumstances (e.g. change of address etc.) should be reported immediately to the HSE."

How do I know if I am eligible for a HAA card?

As indicated on the previous page, men, women and children who contracted Hepatitis C through the administration within the State of contaminated blood and blood products are entitled to healthcare services under the terms of the Health (Amendment) Act 1996. There are certain eligibility criteria, which a person must meet before being awarded a HAA card.

A decision regarding the entitlement of an individual to services under the Health (Amendment) Act, 1996 rests with the Chief Executive Officer of the Health Services Executive or a delegated HSE official.

Eligible persons are persons who, in the opinion of the Chief Executive Officer, have contracted Hepatitis C directly or indirectly from the use of contaminated Anti-D or the administration of contaminated blood or blood products within the State. Eligibility is determined on an individual basis, and applies for the lifetime of

the eligible person. The entitlement does not extend to other family members (except for counselling services, please see section in this guide on counselling services (page 19) for further details).

An application for services is made on a standard form available from the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer in each Health Service Executive Area. (see section on contact details for Liaison Officers).

Establishment of Eligibility

The guidelines for establishment of eligibility are set out below, however the final decision on whether an application satisfies the requirements of the legislation lies with the Chief Executive Officer of the HSE or a delegated HSE Official.

To establish eligibility the following **must** be provided with the application;

1. A copy of a positive test result for one of the following Hepatitis C diagnostic tests:
 - The ELISA test
OR
 - The RIBA test
OR
 - The PCR test
 - Or in the absence of any of the above tests, proof that the person displayed symptoms of acute infection with jaundice up to 16 weeks after administration of anti-D
2. Proof that the infection resulted from contaminated blood or blood products administered within the State:
 - Date(s) of Anti-D administration or in the case of transfusion-transmitted infection, copies of medical reports.
 - Any other medical information relevant to the application.
 - Name and address of general practitioner and hospital unit attended in respect of the applicant's Hepatitis C condition.
 - Because of the particular circumstances which apply to persons with haemophilia who received blood products prior to 1992 it is sufficient that the application be accompanied by a standard two-part letter which contains the following (i) confirmation from a haematologist that the applicant has a diagnosed bleeding disorder and stating the year when the applicant first received blood products in this country (or confirmation that the applicant received blood products in this country at any time prior to 1992) and (ii) confirmation from a hepatologist that the applicant has tested positive for either Hepatitis C antibodies or virus. No further documentary evidence is required in respect of this cohort.

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Note

- In the case of blood transfusions, where records do not exist to prove one way or another the source of infection, the expert opinion of medical consultants is usually sought. In such cases, where a consultant is willing to state in writing that in his/her opinion on the balance of probabilities the infection was transmitted by blood or blood products administered in this country, it is open to the Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) of the HSE to decide that this is sufficient to establish eligibility for a Health (Amendment) Act Card.
- There is no requirement for the blood test results to be current. In this regard, it is relevant that the Health Amendment Act (1996) states that the services are to be provided to persons "who were infected with Hepatitis C" and does not stipulate that the infection must be ongoing. If an applicant has documentary evidence of eligible test results in the past then the applicant is entitled to the HAA Card, even if current tests are negative.

A small number of persons who have not been able to provide a positive test result for Hepatitis C but have obtained an award from the Hepatitis C and HIV Compensation Tribunal or the High Court on appeal, on the basis that their symptoms were consistent with resolved Hepatitis C infection due to infection with contaminated blood products may also be eligible to apply for a Health Amendment Act Card.

The Minister for Health and Children in 2006 agreed that any persons who had received an award from the Hepatitis C and HIV Compensation Tribunal or the Courts prior to 20 June 2006, would be entitled access to health services under the Health Amendment Act. For persons who have applied to the Compensation Tribunal before 20th June 2006 and if there is a positive outcome, they are also eligible to access services under the Health Amendment Act. Therefore, you need proof of an award for current or resolved Hepatitis C infection from contaminated blood or blood products administered within the State through the Tribunal or the Courts in order to provide you with a Health Amendment Act Card. This proof can be in the form of a letter from the Compensation Tribunal or from your Solicitor stating that you have received an award from the Tribunal or the High Court relating to your Hepatitis C or HIV infection. For further details on eligibility criteria, please contact the Liaison Officer in your area.

Who are the Liaison Officers and what is their function?

Each of the HSE areas has appointed a Hepatitis C Liaison Officer whose role it is to ensure that persons who have contracted Hepatitis C from the administration of blood or blood products within the State receive the services they are entitled to under the terms of the 1996 Act. The Hepatitis C Liaison Officers are responsible for co-ordinating and assisting you in accessing primary care services only; these are the services that are provided outside of a hospital setting. There is also a Hepatitis C Liaison Officer within the State whose remit extends to liaising with all of the 8 designated hospitals (see chapter 2 for details on designated hospitals) and who has an oversight role nationally in relation to all aspects of the delivery of Hepatitis C services. Contact details for all of the Liaison Officers are listed on the following page. The designated hospitals also have their own Hepatitis C Liaison Officers; in most (though not all cases) the Hepatitis C Liaison Officers are nurses in the Hepatology Units. In case of queries about hospital services, the hospitals' Hepatitis C Liaison Officer/Nurse should be contacted in the first instance.

The Hepatitis C Liaison Officers in the HSE and hospitals are there to help you, and will give you further advice or assistance in respect of the services you are entitled to. The support groups also listed in this booklet will be happy to give you advice as well.

If you are in any doubt about your entitlements or are having difficulty in accessing services you should contact your Liaison Officer in the first instance.

HSE Liaison Officer Contact Details.

Please note these contact details are the most up to date at the time of publication of this guide. You should note the Liaison Officer contact details in your area and any change in this will be notified to you.

HSE Area	Local HSE Area	Liaison Officer Name and Address	Telephone no	Email address
Dublin North East	Dublin North West/ Dublin North/Dublin North Central (former community services areas 6,7 & 8)	Mr Larry Bathe Primary Care Unit Rathdown Road Dublin 7	01 8825003	Larry.bathe@hse.ie
Dublin North East	Cavan, Louth, Meath and Monaghan	Ms. Barbara Leech Primary Care Unit Railway Street Navan Co Meath	046 9076451	Barbara.leech@hse.ie
Dublin Mid Leinster	Dublin South West/ Dublin West/Dublin South/Kildare West Wicklow (former community services areas 3,4,5 & 9).	Ms. Anne Tiernan/ Ms. Valerie Whelan Primary Care Unit Block E Westland Park Nangor Road Dublin 22	01 460 9671	atiernan@hse.ie
Dublin Mid Leinster	Dublin South East/ Dun Laoghaire/Bray/ Wicklow (former community services areas 1, 2 & 10)	Ms Carmel Donohoe/ John Fennell Health Services Executive Civic Centre Main Street Bray Co. Wicklow	01 2744291	carmel.donohoe@hse.ie j.fennell@hse.ie

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HSE Area	Local HSE Area	Liaison Officer Name and Address	Telephone no	Email address
Dublin Mid Leinster	Laois, Longford, Offaly, Westmeath	Ms Elaine Barry Primary Care Unit Health Services Executive St. Loman's Springfield Mullingar Co Westmeath	044 9384429	elainem.barry@hse.ie
South	Carlow/Kilkenny/ Tipperary South/ Waterford/Wexford	Mr Cathal O'Reilly/ Ms Breda Aylward Health Services Executive South Eastern Area Lacken Dublin Road Kilkenny	056 7784160 056 7784113	cathal.oreilly@hse.ie breda.aylward@hse.ie
South	Cork/Kerry	Mr Donal Murphy Primary Care Unit Health Services Executive Southern Area 26/27 South Mall Cork	021 492 1872	Donal.murphy2@hse.ie
West	Clare/Limerick/ Tipperary North	Mr Michael Griffin Primary Care Unit Manager Health Services Executive Ballycumin Avenue Raheen Business Park Limerick	061 464002 061 464004	michaelf.griffin@hse.ie
West	Leitrim/Sligo/Donegal	Ms Phil Mulligan/ Sadie Flanagan Health Services Executive Iona Office Block Main Street Ballyshannon Co. Donegal	074 9122322 071 9834000	phil.mulligan@hse.ie sadie.Flanagan@hse.ie

HSE Area	Local HSE Area	Liaison Officer Name and Address	Telephone no	Email address
West	Galway/Mayo/Roscommon	Ms Catherine Cunningham Health Services Executive Western Area Merlin Park Regional Hospital Galway	091 775416	Catherine.Cunningham@hse.ie

For all queries which cannot be resolved at local level in both primary/community services and within the hospital units, please contact the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer as follows,

Michele Tait, Hepatitis C Liaison Officer

HSE

Mill Lane

Palmerstown

Dublin 20

Tel (01) 6201750 /6201712

michele.tait@hse.ie

What do I do if I lose my HAA Card?

If for any reason you lose or misplace your HAA Card, you should notify your Hepatitis C Liaison Officer as soon as possible. The Hepatitis C Liaison Officer will cancel your original number, and will issue you with a new card, and a new number. For your convenience, you will find in the back of this guide a form, which can be completed and returned to your Liaison Officer to inform them of your card being mislaid.

What do I do if I change address?

If you change address it is very important that you inform your Liaison Officer. This is to ensure that you continue to receive any relevant information that will be of interest to you and also so that we can contact you in relation to any re-imbursements etc that you might require. For your convenience a change of address form is included in the back of this guide, which you should complete and return to your Liaison Officer in the event of you moving address.

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Confidentiality

Any details that you give whether on applying for the HAA card or on making general enquiries, change of address etc will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

From time to time, the HSE may need to contact you. This may be in response to a query you have made, or to forward payment to you in respect of costs being recouped. New information of interest to you might come to hand, such as improvements to service arrangements or the availability of new services. You are also entitled to be kept informed of relevant changes in the HSE's administrative or community care staff or in the HSE's lists of private contractors who provide services to HAA cardholders. The HSE may also write to you to inform you of information sessions and conferences which they are hosting.

At your request, the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer can arrange for your correspondence to be directed to any address of your choice, it does not have to be your home address. A small number of people have requested that no correspondence be sent to them by the HSE, and this request has been accommodated.

Similarly, if you request that no telephone contact be made with you, or you wish to restrict contact to a mobile phone only, then your wishes will be respected. When telephoning you at your designated number, if you are not available the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer will never leave a message with another person, which might compromise your confidentiality, without your permission.

If you have any concerns regarding confidentiality, which are not covered above, do not hesitate to discuss these with your Hepatitis C Liaison Officer, who will make every effort to find a solution that will suit you.

What do I do if I have a complaint or wish to make an appeal on a decision?

Most of the service providers you will encounter are private contractors, and are not employed by the HSE. These are mostly health care professionals who work outside hospitals or community health centres, such as GPs, dentists, pharmacists, opticians, counsellors, chartered physiotherapists.

If you have a problem with the services provided by one of these health care professionals you should do the following:

- If the complaint is about eligibility for services, payment, entitlements and so on, you should contact your Hepatitis C Liaison Officer in the HSE or hospital, who will assist in resolving matters;
- If the complaint is about the service provider's professional conduct, you should complain directly to the relevant professional body, and also inform your Hepatitis C Liaison Officer;
- If your problem relates to one of the HSE's own staff, the HSE have implemented formal complaints procedures which can be accessed by writing to the HSE's headquarters in Dr. Steeven's Hospital, Dublin 8.
- If you have a problem you might also wish to contact one of the support groups listed in the back of this guide, who will usually be able to offer assistance and advice.

In summary

Persons who contracted Hepatitis C through the administration within the State of contaminated blood and blood products and who therefore hold a Health Amendment Act (HAA) card are entitled to a range of primary care services and hospital based services including

- GP Services
- Prescribed drugs, medications, aids and appliances
- Dental services
- Aural services
- Ophthalmic services
- Home support
- Home nursing
- Counselling
- Complementary therapy
- Chiropody services
- Physiotherapy

Each of these and all other services including hospital based services are described in the relevant chapter of the guide

Further Information

As much detail as possible has been provided in this Guide with regard to the services available under the Health (Amendment) Act, 1996, but it will not cover every eventuality. So if you have queries with regard to any aspect of these services you should contact your Hepatitis C Liaison Officer.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

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When you are first told that you have Hepatitis C, your family doctor (GP) will arrange for you to see a hospital consultant who specialises in treating this illness. A number of hospitals have been funded by the Health Service Executive to provide you with health care.

Designated Units

For adults with Hepatitis C, the Liver Units which have been specially designated to provide your care are located in the following public hospitals:

- Beaumont Hospital, Dublin 9;
- Mater Misericordiae University Hospital, Dublin 7;
- St. James's Hospital, Dublin 8;
- St. Vincent's University Hospital, Dublin 4;
- St. Luke's Hospital, Kilkenny;
- Cork University Hospital, Wilton, Cork;
- University College Hospital, Galway;

What about children with Hepatitis C?

Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin Dublin 12 provides services to children with Hepatitis C, until the age of 18. After their 18th birthday, children are referred by Our Lady's Hospital to one of the adult Liver Units of their choice.

Hepatitis C patients who are HAA cardholders are entitled to the following hospital services in one of the designated public hospitals:

- Open access to hospital facilities for Hepatitis C or any related condition, including the right to a public hospital bed
- That no patient should have to wait more than one hour for their scheduled appointment to see a clinician in a public hospital (excluding A&E). However, emergencies may arise which may result in longer waiting times.
- That no patient has to wait more than two weeks for an appointment with their liver specialist and also for the **first** referral to another specialty, this is generally referred to as the "two week rule". Once a patient referred by the Liver Consultant to another Consultant in a public hospital for the testing, investigation or treatment of any condition will be given a priority appointment within two weeks for the **first consultation only**. Subsequent appointments with specialities other than hepatology will be arranged on the basis of medical need and will **not** fall within the 2 week rule. Each liver unit in each of the 8 designated hospitals providing services to the HAA cardholders are aware of your entitlements regarding referrals to other specialties and in particular the time frame in which they must facilitate you being seen. It is important that if there are any difficulties in having your referral to another consultant facilitated within the specified timeframe that the reason for **this is explained to you**.

- All of the liver units have indicated their commitment to facilitating everyone so that all onward referrals into other specialities will be arranged within the 2-week timeframe in so far as possible. **Again where there are difficulties or delays anticipated, this should be explained to you and every effort will be made to arrange your appointment as quickly as possible.**
- That each Unit will have a designated ward area for patients who are admitted for testing, treatment or biopsy. A minimum of five days admission to a public hospital bed, whilst not always necessary, will be offered to patients for anti-viral therapy initiation if they wish.
- Where it is clinically indicated that a liver transplant is required, access to the transplant procedure will be available without delay, subject to the availability of a suitable organ and medical priority. In the event that the particular procedure cannot be performed in Ireland, arrangements can be made, on the recommendation of the treating clinician, for the procedure to be performed abroad.
- While you are an inpatient in a public hospital bed as a result of Hepatitis C or any related condition you are entitled to any hospital tests you need without charge. If you are referred to a hospital as an outpatient or day-patient by a GP or consultant whom you are seeing as a public patient, you are entitled to any hospital tests free of charge, including tests using specialized diagnostic equipment. **It is important that you contact the Hepatitis C Liaison Nurse in your designated liver unit should you have any difficulty in accessing any part of your entitlements within the hospital setting. There is also a dedicated Liaison Officer (details in chapter 1) to deal with issues or problems you may have regarding appointment dates, onward referrals etc in any of the designated hospitals.**
- Hospital services which are not related in any way to Hepatitis C are available to you under the same general conditions as to other members of the public. Your Hepatologist will decide whether any condition is potentially Hepatitis C-related or not.
- Vaccinations for Hepatitis A and B, if required, are available from your designated hospital (see also under GP Services).

Support Staff

Staff in the Liver/Hepatology Units of the eight designated hospitals are very well informed on the entitlements attached to the HAA card. Each Unit has a dedicated Liaison Nurse whose role is to act as a point of contact for you in the liver unit and in the hospital itself. The Health Service Executive work very closely with clinicians and staff in the liver/hepatology units to ensure there is equal access to services from one hospital to another and also that HAA cardholders appointments/referrals etc are facilitated within agreed timeframes and would hold meetings on a regular basis.

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Contact Details

Beaumont Hospital

Hepatology Unit
Beaumont Road
Dublin 9
Tel: 01 8092220/ 8093000
Fax: 01 8092219
Contact: Emer Bolger
Ciara Corrigan
Mary McDonagh

St. James's Hospital

Hepatology Unit
James's Street
Dublin 8
Tel: 01 4103417 / 01 4103000
Fax: 01 4103418
Contact: Helena Irish
Barbara Hynes
Carol Ann Brogan
Sharon Buckley

Our Lady's Children's Hospital Crumlin

Hepatology Unit
Crumlin Hospital
Dublin 12
Tel: 01 4282527/ 01 4096742
Fax: 01 4096217
Contact: Eleanor Knopfler
Ursula McConnell

St. Luke's Hospital

Hepatology Unit
Kilkenny
Tel: 056 7785308 / 056 7785329
Fax: 056 7752232
Contact: Angela Buggy
Pauline Carroll
Noreen Maher

Mater Misericordiae Hospital

Centre for Liver Disease
55 Eccles Street
Dublin 3
Tel: 01 8032048 / 8032000
Fax: 01 8034058
Contact: Caroline Walsh
Mags Mc Andrew

St. Vincent's University Hospital

Liver Unit
Elm Park
Dublin 4
Tel: 01 2774713 / 01 2774000
Fax: 01 2218960
Contact: Sheila O'Toole
Aileen Murphy
Carol McNulty

University College Hospital

Hepatology Unit
Galway
Tel: 091 544370 / 091 524222
Fax: 091 520233
Contact: Margaret Scarry
Mary Bohan Keane
Sheenagh McLaverty

Cork University Hospital

Hepatology Unit
Wilton
Cork
Tel: 021 4922274 / 021 4922167
Fax: 021 4936383
Contact: Susan Corbett
Eleanor Healy

PRIMARY AND COMMUNITY BASED HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

CHAPTER 3

WHAT ARE THESE SERVICES?

Community based health and social care services, also known as Primary Care services include any healthcare services which are available outside of the hospital setting either through the Health Service Executive in your area or in some circumstances through other accredited professionals. Each community based service is described here individually.

CHIROPODY / PODIATRY SERVICES

Chiropodists assess, diagnose and treat diseases and abnormalities of the foot. Chiropodists work will vary greatly from one chiropodist to another and will depend on the individual clients needs. Podiatry is a medical term used that means more or less the same as chiropody and is now becoming more widely used. The aim of chiropody/podiatry services is to cure the patient's problem and where possible, prevent recurrence of existing foot problems or the development of new foot problems. Health promotion is another important aspect of the chiropodist's work.

The type of services which are offered by most chiropodist / podiatrists include the following:

- foot-care and footwear advice;
- pain management in the foot;
- nail surgery;
- verrucae treatment;
- diabetic footcare and continuous assessment;
- preventative footcare by the use of customised orthotics.

Arrangements for chiropody and podiatry services vary from area to area. Some HSE areas provide chiropody/podiatry services through their own clinics, others arrange for private contractors to provide it on their behalf. Some hospitals also provide chiropody/podiatry services under certain circumstances, and on the basis of medical need. There are a small number of Chiropodists who have given their contact details to Liaison Officers and who are willing to provide services, and bill the HSE directly. **You should check with your Liaison Officer to see if there is a list of Chiropodists from your area available. In any case the Liaison Officer will assist you in accessing chiropody services.**

HAA cardholders can also avail of chiropody/podiatry services from any qualified chiropodist/podiatrist. You can avail of as many visits to the chiropodist/podiatrist as you need and there is no requirement to obtain prior approval or a GP's referral. You can then either recoup the cost of your consultations with the chiropodist on production of receipts with your Liaison Officer or alternatively the Liaison Officer can arrange to pay the chiropodist directly on your behalf. You should discuss with your Liaison Officer whichever arrangement suits you best and it will be facilitated. If the chiropodist/podiatrist is unwilling to be paid directly or go onto the Liaison Officers list of Chiropodists, or if you would prefer that the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer did not get involved, you are still free to attend this chiropodist/podiatrist and have the cost recouped. You do not have to attend a local chiropodist/podiatrist, or to continue attending the same chiropodist/podiatrist if you choose not to.

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If you attend a chiropodist/podiatrist other than those on the HSE list, you should be careful to check that he/she is professionally qualified. Hepatitis C Liaison Officers will not refund the cost of chiropody services provided by an unqualified or unregistered practitioner. If in doubt, check with the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer before incurring any expense.

The Department of Health and Children is in the process of establishing a revised assessment mechanism for those chiropodists/podiatrists who wish to work in the public health service. This will involve establishing minimum standards for acceptable practice and assessment of chiropodists/podiatrists against this standard.

There are four separate professional bodies representing chiropodists/podiatrists in Ireland:

- Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists in Ireland;
- Irish Chiropodists/Podiatrists Organisation Ltd.;
- Institute of Chiropodists and Podiatrists in Ireland;
- Irish Branch of the British Chiropody and Podiatry Association.

If you require further information about chiropody or wish to check whether your practitioner is a registered member of one of these organisations, you should contact them directly. The telephone numbers are given at the back of this Guide.

In Summary

- You are entitled to all chiropody/podiatry services provided by qualified chiropodists.
- You can avail of services whenever and as often as you wish and do not need referral from a GP or prior approval from your Liaison Officer.
- Payment can be arranged by the HSE directly with your chiropodist if you wish or you can be reimbursed by your Liaison Officer on production of receipts.
- If you have any queries on any aspect of chiropody services you should speak with your Liaison Officer.

COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES

What are complementary therapies?

There are a wide variety of complementary therapies, and the term generally refers to therapies that are not used as part of conventional medicine. However, the position is now changing, and some healthcare professionals are now offering and providing complementary therapies to their patients as part of their overall care. Many people have found complementary therapies beneficial in dealing with a number of conditions as part of their overall care and well-being. Complementary therapies may include for example;

- Massage
- Reflexology
- Acupuncture
- Aromatherapy
- Hydrotherapy

How can I avail of complementary therapies with my HAA card?

Complementary therapies are available to all HAA cardholders as part of the overall range of healthcare services provided to you. These services are available to you in a number of settings including some of the hospitals where there are designated liver units and also in some private practices. There are a number of complementary therapists who provide therapies to HAA cardholders in the private setting and contact details for some of these are available from your Liaison Officer. Some of the patient support groups have lists of registered practitioners who also work as complementary therapists and if you are a member of one of the groups you should contact them for further details.

In order for you to avail of complementary therapies privately and to have the cost of this covered under your HAA card, it is important that you ensure the therapist providing the particular therapy is a registered medical practitioner. This can include a GP, RGN or in the case of massage for example, a Physiotherapist. A small but growing number of GP's now provide acupuncture and similarly some chartered physiotherapists provide massage-based therapies, manipulation-based therapies, or hydrotherapy. Registered nurses may have appropriate qualifications in massage-based therapies. Some registered chiropodists may have appropriate qualifications to provide reflexology.

It is essential that your liver specialist approves of any complementary therapy that you are proposing to avail of. You should keep your liver specialist informed of any service or treatment you are undertaking, regardless of whether the HSE are refunding all or part of the cost or you are paying for it in full yourself.

In general, you should talk to your Hepatitis C Liaison Officer first to check the position regarding payment. The Hepatitis C Liaison Officer will refund the cost of complementary therapies under the following criteria:

- the therapist is a currently registered general practitioner, currently registered nurse or chartered physiotherapist
- in the case of reflexology the therapist must be either a registered general practitioner, a registered general nurse, chartered physiotherapist or a currently registered chiropodist.

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- the general practitioner, nurse, chartered physiotherapist or registered chiropodist has appropriate qualifications in the therapy being offered, copies of qualifications will be validated by Liaison Officers

If you have been referred by your GP or Liver Specialist to undertake a course of complementary therapy, one referral is necessary and then it will be at the discretion of the therapist as to how many, which type and for what duration you need to attend sessions. In the hospital setting the Liver Unit which you attend may refer you to complementary therapies that are available within the hospital and in certain cases there are therapy services provided within some of the liver units.

If you are thinking about using complementary therapies of any kind, always discuss with your liver specialist first. Even therapies, herbs or supplements that seem harmless can cause unexpected problems, or can react badly with other conventional medicines or therapies that have been prescribed for you

For your own protection, you should check that your therapist has an acceptable level of professional indemnity or insurance.

At the moment, no complementary therapy is regulated by the Department of Health and Children, or by any recognised regulatory agency acting on its behalf including the Health Service Executive. Neither are there any statutory registration bodies for persons offering these services. As a result, it is not possible to give any advice on appropriate qualifications for persons who are not registered GPs, nurses or chartered physiotherapists. The Report of the National Working Group on the Regulation of Complementary Therapists, launched in May 2006 by the Department of Health and Children, makes a number of recommendations on strengthening the regulatory environment for complementary therapists.

At the same time as the launch of the Report in 2006, an Information Guide for the Public was also launched. It offers guidance for members of the public when choosing to see a complementary therapist. Copies of this leaflet are available from www.dohc.ie/publications.

In Summary

- Complementary therapies are available to you under the terms of the Health Amendment Act card and can be availed of once referred by a GP or Consultant.
- One referral is sufficient to allow you to attend sessions as often as required and agreed by your therapist.
- Therapies can be availed of in both the public and private setting.
- Therapies availed of in the private setting must be performed by a therapist who is qualified as a registered practitioner, i.e. GP, RGN, Physiotherapist, Chiropodist.
- Your Hepatitis C Liaison officer can advise on qualified therapists in your area and will make arrangements to pay them directly on your behalf or re-imburse you on production of receipts/evidence of qualifications.

COUNSELLING SERVICES

Who can avail of counselling services?

Counselling is a very personal and important aspect of the overall care of persons with Hepatitis C and their immediate relatives. Access to counselling services is provided in a way which is flexible and fits in with the needs of clients so that they can avail of counselling wherever and whenever it is needed.

Counselling, including psychological and psychotherapy services, can be availed of at any time by HAA cardholders and their immediate relatives. Counselling is also available to persons who received infected or potentially infected Anti-D, blood or blood products but who have tested negative for Hepatitis C.

Many people attend a counsellor directly after they have been diagnosed, or when they are preparing to attend the Hepatitis C & HIV Compensation Tribunal or the High Court. However, you are not confined to seeking counselling at these times; you can attend a counsellor whenever you feel you need to. You do not have to remain with this counsellor if you would prefer to attend another, nor do you have to attend a local counsellor if you choose not to do so. The choice of Counsellor is entirely yours.

How can I access counselling?

You do not need to be referred by your GP or consultant for counselling and you do not need prior approval from the Liaison Officer, as long as you attend one of the counsellors on the HSE list, which is available from your Liaison Officer. This also applies to counselling services for your spouse or partner and children (including adult children). In the case of children who contracted Hepatitis C, counselling services will also be available to their parents, brothers and sisters, without prior approval or referral.

Under certain circumstances, counselling for adults with Hepatitis C can also be extended to other close family members, particularly relatives or carers who are living with you or who are in close contact with you, with the prior approval of your Hepatitis C Liaison Officer.

Each Liaison Officer in the HSE has a list of counsellors who are available to provide counselling under the Health (Amendment) Act, 1996. The Liaison Officers have checked the credentials and qualifications of these counsellors to ensure that they are professionally trained and accredited. At the moment, accreditation from the following bodies is acceptable and recognised by the HSE.

- Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI)
- Irish Association for Counselling and Therapy (IACT)
- Irish Council for Psychotherapy (ICP).

The Liaison Officer pays the counselling fees directly to the counsellors registered to provide this counselling service. To avail of this service, you should contact the counsellor of your choice directly to arrange your appointment. S/he will ask you to sign a form that will allow him/her to be paid by the HSE for the consultation.

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If you are already attending, or wish to attend, a counsellor who is not on the HSE list you will have to pay the counselling fee directly to the counsellor yourself. By providing your Liaison Officer with registration/accreditation details of your counsellor you will be able to recoup these payments but you should always discuss with them in advance if that is possible to make arrangements. You should also satisfy yourself about the qualifications and professional accreditation of any counsellor you attend who is not on the HSE list.

In general, the HSE will not refund payments in respect of counsellors who do not have professional accreditation. However, under exceptional circumstances, the HSE has the discretion to refund such fees, particularly if you have already built up a relationship with a counsellor. However, you should note that this does not mean that the HSE is endorsing unaccredited counsellors in any way and you attend an unaccredited counsellor at your own risk. Such counsellors will not be added to the HSE's list and the Liaison Officer will not refund any other HAA cardholder to attend this counsellor. In other words the Liaison Officer will deal with each client and their preference for accessing a particular counsellor on an individual basis.

Any queries with regard to this service should in the first instance be directed to the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer.

What about counselling services/psychological support in hospital?

Although you do not need a doctor's referral for counselling, your liver specialist might decide that you need additional psychological support, and will refer you to an appropriate professional, either within the hospital, or in the community. Most of the designated units have a Hepatitis C Nurse Counsellor. In some instances s/he may not have the facility to offer counselling on a regular basis, although this can vary from hospital to hospital. However, s/he will be happy to talk you through any specific problems you have, perhaps in conjunction with your hospital visit (it would be advisable to phone first to make sure that the nurse counsellor will be available). Even if a unit does not have a qualified nurse counsellor, the dedicated Hepatitis C Nurse will be happy to talk you through any specific problems you might have. Some hospital units also have the services of a Psychologist.

Counselling can also be availed of to address special needs. If you are undertaking anti-viral treatment, support will be available from a specially trained treatment nurse and in some liver units support from the units psychologist may be available; your hospital will give you details when your planned treatment is being discussed with you. Counselling can also be necessary to address problems caused directly or indirectly by Hepatitis C within a marriage, or within a family. The Liaison Officer in your area will be able to advise whether counsellors on their lists have particular skills in these areas.

Psychiatry services are also available to HAA cardholders, referrals are made on very specific medical needs and only by your GP/Consultant. Access to this service is generally separate to counselling services and normally provided on an out-patient basis in the hospital setting.

In summary

- Counselling is available to all HAA cardholders and immediate relatives.
- Prior approval and referral from a GP/Consultant is not required.
- There is no restriction or limit on the number of sessions you attend, this is a decision only you and your counsellor can reach.
- Counselling is available to family members of children who were infected with Hepatitis C.
- Counselling and /or psychological support is available in the hospital setting also, you will need to check with each unit to see what supports are in place.
- In all cases if you are unsure of your access to counselling or if you wish to see the list of counsellors on the HSE list you should speak to your Liaison Officer.

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DENTAL SERVICES

HAA Cardholders are entitled to all

- necessary routine and emergency dental treatment
- full denture treatment and appliances

Dental treatments will be provided by dentists who participate in the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (D.T.S.S.) operated by the Health Service Executive. (A list of participating dentists is given at the back of this Guide or from your Liaison Officer). If the dentist of your choice participates in the D.T.S.S. s/he must provide you with services at the agreed D.T.S.S. rates.

How do I avail of services from a participating dentist?

Once you have checked with your Liaison Officer that your chosen dentist is on the list of dentists participating in the DTSS scheme, you may begin attending them for treatment and then simply present your HAA card to them as payment.

Note: Before you leave the dentist's surgery, you will be asked to sign a form that will enable the dentist to be paid for the consultation.

If you require a prescription - your dentist should write your prescriptions on a private prescription form (*not on the form used for medical card prescriptions*). You are then entitled to have these prescriptions dispensed without charge on production of your HAA card by a pharmacist. (please see page 33 for further details on pharmacy services)

Can I attend a Dentist who does not participate in the Scheme?

If your dentist does not participate in the D.T.S.S. you can continue routine treatment with this dentist, provided you have the prior approval of the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer.

Hepatitis C Liaison Officers will look sympathetically at such applications, particularly if you have been attending the dentist for some time or there is no D.T.S.S. participating dentist in your local area.

What treatments are covered?

The following are the different types of treatments, which are covered by the scheme:

- Oral Examination;
- Scaling and treatment of mild gum conditions;
- Routine Fillings;
- Extractions (including surgical);
- Root canal treatment (front teeth upper / lower);
- Amputation of roots;
- X-rays;
- Dentures (including repairs).

For more serious conditions your dentist may refer you to an appropriate expert for investigation and/or treatment.

Are other dental treatments covered?

As well as the routine dental treatments described above, other treatments might be provided in certain circumstances, with the prior agreement of the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer, who will be guided by the advice of the Health Service Executive Principal Dental Surgeon. Treatments which are considered as cosmetic, such as: crowns / bridges / Orthodontic treatment are generally not covered.

Orthodontic treatment is not covered if it is solely for cosmetic purposes. There might be instances where orthodontic treatment is required for other reasons, and the HSE Principal Dental Surgeon or Orthodontic Consultant will have the final say in deciding on whether it is eligible for refund or not. In some circumstances, the HSE might decide to recoup part of the cost, but not the full amount.

However, if the dentist is of the opinion that such treatment is justified the dentist must apply to the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer outlining the ground of the request.

In the case of **non-routine dental treatments** which have been approved and completed, the invoice/receipt should be forwarded directly to the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer.

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In summary

- Any dental treatments which are medically necessary are covered.
- If you have any doubt as to whether a treatment is medically necessary or not, please check with the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer before incurring any expense.
- The Liaison Officer will seek the advice of the Principal Dental Surgeon or Orthodontic Consultant.
- If you have any particular difficulty with any aspect of the scheme you should contact the relevant Hepatitis C Liaison Officer.
- If necessary, the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer will refer problems to the HSE Principal Dental Surgeon for advice.

GENERAL PRACTITIONER SERVICES

You are entitled to the following:

- To attend any registered GP of your choice.
- To change GP if you wish (for health reasons it would be better to remain with a specific doctor who would have the primary responsibility for providing services to you).
- To all general practitioner (GP) medical and surgical services, in relation to all medical conditions, provided by a registered medical practitioner chosen by you.

This service is provided by:

- All registered GPs (Doctors who are registered with the Irish Medical Council).
- GPs that are members of the Primary Care Reimbursement Services Scheme (PCRS). Doctors who are members of the PCRS scheme are reimbursed for the cardholders visit from the PCRS. Prior to leaving the GP's surgery, you should sign a form (General Practitioner Consultation Claim Form for Health (Amendment) Act, 1996 or Special Treatment Cover Form / STC), this will enable the GP to claim payment for your visit from the PCRS.
- Private GPs. Private doctors are reimbursed via your Liaison Officer. You may pay the GP and send the receipt to your Liaison Officer for reimbursement or the GP can send an invoice to the Liaison Officer for payment.

Prescriptions:

- The GP should write prescriptions on a private prescription form.
- A pharmacist will dispense prescriptions prescribed by your GP without charge on production of your HAA card (please see page 33 for further details on pharmacy services)

Out of Hours GP services:

Should you require a GP out of hours there are many existing telephone lines and services available in your area for out of hours GP's and on-call doctors. You should enquire via your Liaison Officer for further details on what is available in your area. You will of course be covered for this service with your HAA card but in the unlikely event that the GP on-call does not have the facility to record your HAA card, you will be re-imbursed by your Liaison Officer for any expense incurred.

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Hepatitis A & B Vaccinations are available from the following:

- Your designated hospital or if you prefer from.
- Your GP (You will usually have to arrange this in advance with the GP of your choice).

Travel Vaccinations:

- The HAA Card covers vaccinations required prior to travelling abroad.
- Travel vaccinations can be administered by GPs, (most GPs will not routinely carry stocks of these vaccines and will have to order them for you).
- Travel vaccinations will usually only be available with your GP by prior appointment. If you are planning to travel abroad, you are advised to check this with your GP well in advance.

HEARING TESTS AND AIDS

Hearing tests and aids (sometimes referred to as aural services) are available to all HAA cardholders.

If you have difficulty with your hearing, you are advised to contact your GP or hepatologist in the first instance, so that any medical problems can be ruled out. If necessary, your hepatologist or GP might decide to refer you to an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) specialist. This referral as with all referrals to another specialty should be facilitated within 2 weeks and you should liaise with the Hepatitis C Liaison Nurse in your Liver Unit.

Alternatively, you might be referred to an audiology service for further investigation and treatment, or for the supply of a hearing aid. In general, this service is provided by the HSE's own professionals but, in some cases, it can be provided by private practitioners, who have an arrangement with the HSE or where the service required is not available within the public health service.

If any cardholder requires hearing tests and/or hearing aids/he should initially contact the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer for details of how to access the service, as arrangements for audiology services vary from region to region.

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HOME NURSING SERVICE

(the Service specified in Section 60 of the Health Act, 1970)

Home nursing is available in respect of all conditions affecting the health of eligible persons, not just Hepatitis C.

In 2006 the HSE began developing a co-ordinated approach to home nursing services for HAA cardholders. This involved appointing a dedicated person within the greater Dublin area whose role is to establish and develop a specialist home nursing service to all HAA cardholders residing within the greater Dublin area with a view to extending the co-ordinating role nationally. It should be emphasised that requests and referrals for home nursing services as one of the HAA statutory entitlements will be facilitated throughout the country by the HSE.

All referrals for home nursing services should be facilitated through the office of the clinical nurse coordinator in the greater Dublin area and outside this area should be brought to the attention of the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer in the first instance. These referrals can come from the Liver Consultant in the relevant hepatology unit, the client themselves or their family, clients support group, liver transplant coordinator, GP, Public Health Nurse, social worker, Hepatitis C Liaison Officer etc. However, referrals from non-clinicians will be brought to the attention of the hepatology team so that a shared care plan can be developed in collaboration with the relevant health care professionals.

Following referral, the clinical nurse coordinator/designated HSE nurse will carry out an assessment in consultation with the client and family, from which it will be decided what type of care plan is required and fits in appropriately with the clients needs. The home care plan will be an individualised, client focused, flexible and easily accessible plan of care which meets the assessed needs at any given time of each client and which is reviewed on a regular basis to reflect changing needs. The aim of the careplan is to provide and support client focused care in the community to enable the individual to be cared for at home and to reduce unnecessary admissions to hospital. Critical to the success of the care plan will be the involvement of the client and where relevant, his/her family/carer, with the professionals in determining what supports are needed in each individual case.

From time to time it may arise that the circumstances of referral may not give ample time for a full care at home plan to be put in place immediately, and in such a case, services will be put in place as quickly as possible. An interim care plan may be put in place while a full needs assessment is taking place. Each home care plan will be monitored by the clinical nurse coordinator or designated nurse with responsibility for arranging home nursing care and will be reviewed at regular intervals and as client's needs alter.

As the establishment of this dedicated home nursing service is still in its development stage it is important that you link in with your Hepatitis C Liaison Officer and Hepatitis C Nurse Specialist to determine what is available to you in your area and as the service develops you will be notified of arrangements in place locally for you. Further details on the home nursing service available from Maria Breton, Clinical Nurse Co-ordinator Hepatitis C on 01 620 1803

HOME SUPPORT SERVICE

If as a result of your condition, you are having difficulty in carrying out normal household chores, you are entitled to avail of home support services. If your normal household responsibilities include cooking for a family, cleaning the family home or looking after children, the home support service can cover any or all of these duties. Access to home support services is available to both male and female HAA cardholders on production of supporting documentation from your general practitioner or consultant. Supporting documentation should be forwarded to the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer.

The number of hours of home support to be provided is based on your needs and that of your family. The support provided should also be flexible, and fit in with your particular circumstances. For example, cardholders with school-going children might require additional support during the school holidays, or patients undergoing anti-viral therapy might need more support during this time. Home support services can be provided at evenings, weekends or bank holidays in exceptional circumstances, but only if the nature of the support required means that it cannot be provided during normal working hours. Home support provided out of hours is usually paid at premium rates, however, if the reason why the support is provided out of hours is to facilitate your home support worker (for example a family member who is otherwise engaged Monday to Friday) rather than because of your condition, then the premium rate does not apply.

Basically there are 2 options open to you when accessing home support services. You can request the HSE via your Liaison Officer to arrange for the provision of home support service or you can decide to directly employ a person of your choice.

If you opt for a home support service as provided by the HSE, either the Public Health Nurse or Home Help Organiser (depending on the HSE area) will liaise directly with you to ensure that your needs are met.

You should be aware that your home support worker may be made aware by the HSE that you have Hepatitis C, but will be obliged to maintain the confidentiality of this information and any breach of this would result in disciplinary action by the HSE.

The HSE are obliged to provide you with a suitable service, and the onus is not on you to find a home support worker for yourself. Even if you do source your own home support worker, the HSE may be prepared to undertake the role of employer on your behalf and to pay the worker directly but this should be discussed with your Hepatitis C Liaison Officer in the first instance.

IMPORTANT *note re employing your own home support worker/workers.*

If you wish to employ your own home support person, you can do so, on the understanding that you will be responsible for fulfilling the usual employer's requirements, in relation to P.R.S.I., TAX and Public Liability Insurance. The onus will also be on you to advise your home support worker/workers of your medical condition.

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This is a serious legal responsibility and you should think carefully before you take it on. **Because of this, the preferred option is that your HSE area undertakes the direct sourcing, employment and payment of your home support worker.** If you decide to go ahead and employ someone yourself, the HSE will pay the home support grant to you directly and you will be responsible for paying your home support worker yourself. All HSE areas will require a regular form returned from cardholders confirming that the specified hours of home support have been undertaken. On receipt of these signed details, payment will be made at the appropriate rates.

Home support workers are paid on the home help national payscale rates. Details on these rates of pay are available from www.dohc.ie/publications/salaryscales

If you have any queries about any aspect the home support service, you should contact your Hepatitis C Liaison Officer directly.

OPHTHALMIC SERVICES

Treatment and Appliances

If you require eyesight tests and/or spectacles, you can attend any Ophthalmic Optician of your choice. You are entitled to any optical appliance or service that is clinically necessary. The HSE will reimburse the optician directly for the cost of the sight test and spectacle lenses (the rates are agreed annually between the HSE, Department of Health and Children and the Irish Association of Optometrists). Details on allowances you are entitled to are outlined in this section below.

Prior approval from your Hepatitis C Liaison Officer is not required when you avail of ophthalmic services as forms are available in all opticians, which allows your HAA card number to be recorded. Your optician will ask you to sign the form when you receive a service or are dispensed a pair of spectacles, this will enable the optician to be paid for the goods or service. A list of contracted opticians in your area is available from your Liaison Officer.

What am I entitled to?

- An eye examination without charge, whenever necessary.
- Spectacles required for either distance or reading, or both, with plastic lenses if desired. Bifocal and varifocal lenses are also covered.
- The full cost of any clinically necessary lenses.
- A grant of €90 towards the cost of the frames (from 1st July 2005)
- You are entitled to two pairs of new spectacles per prescription within any two-year period, unless of course you need to have them replaced more often because of a change in your prescription.

The cost of any lenses that are clinically necessary in your glasses are covered. In the case of varifocal lenses, a grant of €249 is available for a complete pair (including €90 towards the frames) which should cover the full cost. However, in the case where the complete cost of the varifocals is not covered by the €249 grant, the balance will have to be paid by you and then once you provide receipts to your Liaison Officer you will be re-imbursed. In the meantime the HSE are reviewing the situation with the Association of Optometrists Ireland, to agree a grant, which will cover the total cost of varifocals so that you will not need to be re-imbursed by your Liaison Officer

Any cardholder requiring a *specialist* medical eye examination must be referred by his/her GP or hepatologist to an appropriate consultant (this does not apply to straightforward sight tests), the optician may provide assistance with this in certain cases. The cardholder will receive priority treatment from the HSE's Community Ophthalmic Physician, or will receive their first appointment with a hospital consultant within two weeks. In some cases, an ophthalmologist might do specialist tests in conjunction with your eye examination.

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Any special requirements not covered in this guide will be dealt with on the basis of individual need, and the Hepatitis C Liaison Officers will consider each case on its merits. Any problems which arise in the course of obtaining ophthalmic services can be resolved through the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer.

What if I wear contact lenses?

If you choose contact lenses (standard or disposable) instead of glasses, a grant is made towards the cost of dispensing and materials, and the cost of the examination (these costs include VAT). Where disposable lenses are chosen, the grant applies to the initial testing, dispensing and initial supply costs only, and not for further supplies or testing within a two year period, unless clinically necessary. In circumstances where it is clinically necessary for you to wear contact lenses instead of glasses, the cost of these lenses will be fully covered, provided you have a doctor's recommendation.

PHARMACY SERVICES

PRESCRIBED DRUGS AND MEDICATIONS

HAA cardholders are entitled to any prescribed drugs and medicines without charge. In order to avail of this service you should present your HAA Card to the pharmacy of your choice along with the relevant prescription. The pharmacy you choose is at your discretion. You do not have to attend a local pharmacy, or attend the same pharmacist each time you get a prescription dispensed if you choose not to.

Your prescribing physician, that is your GP, Consultant or Dentist should write your prescription on a private prescription and **not on the prescriptions used for medical cardholders.**

You will be required to sign a receipt for the items dispensed to allow the pharmacist to be paid. Pharmacists are paid through the PCRS (Primary Care Re-imbursement Service) of the HSE. There are certain items which your GP/Consultant/Dentist may prescribe for you and which the pharmacist cannot get re-imbursed for from the PCRS. **In this case the pharmacist needs to get refunded by the HSE directly via your Hepatitis C Liaison Officer and they should not under any circumstances ask you to pay for these items yourself once they have been prescribed. It is a matter for the Pharmacist to address with the Liaison Officer and not with you.**

All pharmacists have been advised that if there are any questions regarding the recoupment of individual items, these should be brought to the attention of either the PCRS, or to the relevant Hepatitis C Liaison Officer, and **not to the HAA cardholder.** Every effort will be made by the HSE and the PCRS to sort out any problems that might arise without recourse to the individual cardholder if at all possible.

What Pharmacy products are not covered?

Cosmetic type toiletries (e.g. perfume etc) are not covered under the HAA card, this does not include creams and lotions used for certain skin conditions, which may be prescribed by your GP or Consultant in certain circumstances. Your Hepatitis C Liaison Officer can advise you on whether or not certain items are available to you on your HAA card and you should discuss any queries with them in the first instance.

High Tech Drugs

The High Tech Drugs Scheme provides for the dispensing of High Tech Medicines through Community Pharmacies. These medicines will generally only be prescribed or initiated by a hospital consultant. Examples of high tech medicines are: anti-rejection drugs for transplant patients, chemotherapy and growth hormones. If you are prescribed a high tech medicine, the hospital will ask you to indicate the community pharmacy from which you wish to obtain these medicines. This does not have to be your local pharmacy or the pharmacy that you normally attend.

However, it is a good idea to get all your medicines from the one pharmacy so that your community pharmacist will be in a position to monitor your overall drug therapy having regard to other medicines that you may also be taking.

If you wish to change your nominated pharmacy, you will need to notify your local HSE high tech liaison officer of your new pharmacy. Details of your local liaison officer will be issued to you when you are prescribed the high tech medicine initially.

CHAPTER 3

Aids and Appliances

You are entitled to receive any necessary aids and appliances under your HAA card, regardless of whether they are required because of your Hepatitis C, or for another condition. These must be prescribed by your GP, Consultant, Occupational Therapist or Public Health Nurse/Clinical Nurse Co-ordinator.

What types of aids and appliances am I entitled to?

There are many different aids and appliances used nowadays by people to assist them inside and outside their home with mobility, movement etc. These include walking sticks and frames, wheelchairs, grab rails, shower seats, bath and bed hoists etc. Depending on your need, the GP/Consultant/ Occupational Therapist will decide what suits you best. Training may be required in the use of certain appliances and in most cases this will be arranged by the Occupational Therapist providing the appliance.

In some cases, medical and surgical aids and appliances might be stocked by pharmacies and can be obtained on foot of a prescription in the same way as drugs and medicines. However, most aids and appliances are specialist in nature and are not routinely available from local pharmacies. In many cases such items can be obtained from the HSE's community services or they can order the item for you. In case of difficulties, the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer will assist.

Certain persons may also be entitled to avail of a grant through the Disabled Persons Grant Scheme which is administered by Local Authorities and this may assist with house modifications etc. Your Local Authority will be able to provide you with further information on this scheme.

Physiotherapy Services

Physiotherapists are specialised members of the healthcare profession who use methods such as exercise, manipulation, and massage to treat pain, injury and disability associated with a wide variety of conditions and illnesses that can affect people of all ages.

Physiotherapy services are available to you either privately by a chartered physiotherapist or else in the hospital setting once you are referred by your GP/Consultant. Chiropractic, osteopathic and hydrotherapy services are also available to you and can be availed of once they are performed by a registered chartered Physiotherapist.

How do I avail of services and arrange payment?

Once you are referred by your GP/Consultant you should contact your Liaison Officer who will advise you on private chartered physiotherapists in your area that already provide physiotherapy services to HAA cardholders and can make an initial appointment for you if you wish. The HSE will then pay this Physiotherapist directly for you each time you attend.

Alternatively you may attend a Physiotherapist of your choice and if you wish, the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer will contact the physiotherapist on your behalf to check whether he/she wishes to be added to the HSE list, or if not, will agree to bill the HSE directly for your own treatment. If the physiotherapist is unwilling, or if you would prefer that the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer did not get involved, you are still free to attend this physiotherapist and have the cost recouped. You do not have to attend a local chartered physiotherapist, or to continue attending the same physiotherapist if you choose not to.

If you attend a chartered physiotherapist other than the ones on the HSE list, you should be careful to check that he/she is professionally qualified. Hepatitis C Liaison Officers will not recoup the cost of physiotherapy or any other associated services provided by an unqualified or unregistered practitioner. If in doubt, check with the Hepatitis C Liaison Officer before incurring any expense.

The Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists is the professional body representing chartered physiotherapists in Ireland. You can find out more information on physiotherapy in Ireland, including contact information for chartered physiotherapists nationwide through their web site or by contacting the Society. Details are included in the **Useful Contact Details** section in chapter 4 of this Guide.

CHAPTER 4

Consultative Council on Hepatitis C

The Consultative Council on Hepatitis C is a statutory body appointed by the Minister for Health and Children to advise and make recommendations on all aspects of Hepatitis C. The Council has sixteen members, appointed for a period of three years and the current council term will expire in September 2009. Six members are appointed by the Minister on the nomination of the support groups representing persons with Hepatitis C (Positive Action, Transfusion Positive, Irish Haemophilia Society and Irish Kidney Association). Ten members are appointed directly by the Minister. The Ministerial appointments cover a cross-section of interests and backgrounds, including a Consultant Hepatologist, a representative of the scientific research community, an official from the HSE and an official from the Department of Health and Children.

The Council operates on the basis of equality and teamwork and has proved a useful forum for pursuing issues of national concern. Among the achievements of the Council to date has been the completion of a major Review of Health Services for Persons with Hepatitis C.

For further information see the Consultative Council's website at www.consultativecouncilonhepc.ie or tel: 01 620 1708

Review of Health Services

A Review of the Health Services Available for Persons who Contracted Hepatitis C through the Administration within the State of Blood or Blood Products (March 2000)

Following a request by the Minister to review services, the Consultative Council on Hepatitis C contracted Professor Hannah McGee, Director of the Health Services Research Centre at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, to carry out the review on its behalf. The review involved a substantial input from all four of the representative groups. Health service providers and managers were also involved in the process. The scope of the review is extensive and includes the availability and delivery of appropriate services relating to health care and support for persons with Hepatitis C.

The recommendations in the report cover the full spectrum of health care services, ranging from recommendations which concern consultant medical staff, nursing staff, paramedical and support staff, and administrative staff. The Council was pleased to note that in many areas the services being provided are broadly meeting the needs of persons with Hepatitis C although there are areas where improvement is necessary.

The main recommendations of the Review are summarised below:

- that a committee of medical consultants be established to agree treatment protocols for persons with Hepatitis C.
- that the system whereby patients are given priority referrals by their consultant hepatologist to another specialty be regularised. Also, a comprehensive referral system for physiotherapy should be established to ensure that it is available to all who require it.
- that guidelines be developed for the management of death, including funeral arrangements, so

- that the necessary safe practices are understood and accepted by all concerned.
- that HSE Hepatitis C Liaison Officers meet on a regular basis to ensure uniformity and continuity in the provision of primary health care services.
- that HSE Hepatitis C Liaison Officers ensure choice of counsellors and counselling locations in all health board areas.
- that a general training programme be available for all home support workers and that issues relating to the recruitment and retention of home support workers be reviewed.
- that primary care staff be adequately informed about the actual risk of hepatitis C transmission and guidelines on universal precautions against transmission to ensure that patients will be treated in a sensitive manner.
- that the role of complementary therapies be reviewed as part of a wider evaluation of the use of such therapies in the Irish health system.
- that a national database be established for research purposes by an independent co-ordinating agency.
- that assurances be given that adequate funding and resources will continue to be provided to ensure a quality health care service for persons with Hepatitis C.
- that progress on the recommendations in the Review be monitored annually over a three-year period by a sub-committee of the Consultative Council on Hepatitis C.

Since this review was published in 2000 a further study was commissioned by the Consultative Council to examine progress on the recommendations of the Review of Health Services. This report was published in 2005 and examined the implementation of the recommendations and also made an additional 4 new recommendations. It is hoped that this new report will further enable service planners, service providers and support groups to continue working together to ensure future needs of individuals living with Hepatitis C are met. Every HAA cardholder should have received a copy of this 2005 report, additional copies are available from the Consultative Council on Hepatitis C (tel 01 6201708) or your Hepatitis C Liaison Officer.

Additional recommendations 2005

- That a home nursing service be established nationally in anticipation and in advance of increased demand.
- That access to necessary healthcare professionals be organised so that appropriate tailored health promotion interventions can be provided to promote health and well being
- That on-going monitoring of emerging needs be conducted, alongside tracking of emerging therapies and changes in practice
- That the challenges of young adulthood for this group be anticipated in order to assist professionals, young people themselves and their families in addressing their emerging concerns.
- Copies of the 2000 and 2005 reports are available from www.consultativecouncilonhepc.ie or by contacting your Liaison Officer.

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Publications

The Consultative Council on Hepatitis C has published the following documents, which can be obtained from your Hepatitis C Liaison Officer or from www.consultativecouncilonhepc.ie or by calling 01 6201708

- Living with Hepatitis C.
- Counselling Services for Persons with Hepatitis C.
- A booklet for parents of children with Hepatitis C has been produced in conjunction with the staff of Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin.
- Guide to liver transplantation.
- Information leaflet on the HAA Card.
- Annual reports 2000-2006.
- Information leaflet on the National Hepatitis C Database.
- Living positively with Hepatitis C.
- Relationship issues and Hepatitis C.

These documents are also available on the Consultative Council's website:
www.consultativecouncilonhepc.ie

SUPPORT GROUPS

The four main patient support groups, Transfusion Positive, Positive Action, The Irish Haemophilia Society and The Irish Kidney Association provide a vital role as advocates for their members and are represented on the Consultative Council and also on a number of working groups convened by the HSE Liaison Officers and the Department of Health and Children in order to monitor services and identify emerging needs on an ongoing basis. The support groups also meet with individual hospitals and consultants to discuss specific issues of concern to their members. The support groups may be contacted as follows:

Positive Action

56, Fitzwilliam Square
Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 6762853 Lo call 1850 200 231

Fax: (01) 6620009

Email: info@positiveaction.ie

Web: www.positiveaction.ie

Positive Action provides support to women who contracted Hepatitis C through the administration of contaminated Anti-D, and also provide support to their families

Transfusion Positive

3 Clanwilliam Square
Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 6398854 / 5

Fax: (01) 6398856

Email: transfusionpositive@eircom.net

Transfusion Positive provides support to men, women and children and their families who contracted Hepatitis C through a contaminated blood transfusion and blood products

Irish Haemophilia Society

First Floor Cathedral Court
New Street,
Dublin 8

Tel: (01) 6579900

Fax: (01) 6579901

Email info@haemophilia.ie

Web: www.haemophilia.ie

The Irish Haemophilia Society provides information, education and services to all members of the families of persons with Haemophilia and related bleeding disorders including those with hepatitis C and/or HIV

Irish Kidney Association

Donor House
Block 43A, Park West
Dublin 12

Tel: (01) 6205306 Lo Call: 1890 45 65 56

Fax: (01) 6205366

Email info@ika.ie

Web: www.ika.ie

The Irish Kidney Association provides support to people with kidney problems who are either on dialysis treatment or are organ recipients including those who have contracted Hepatitis C

CHAPTER 4

Other Useful Information/Contact Details

Government Departments and Agencies

CITIZENS INFORMATION BOARD (Formerly Comhairle)

7th Floor
Hume House
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4
Tel: 01 605 9000
Fax: 01 605 9099
Website: www.citizensinformationboard.ie

The Citizens Information Board is the national support agency responsible for the provision of information, advice and advocacy to members of the public on social services. A list of Regional Centres is available from their website.

National Disability Resource Centre (NDRC)

44 North Great George's Street
Dublin 1
Office Hours: 10.00am - 1.00pm and 2.00pm - 4.00pm, Monday - Friday.

Access Service

44 North Great George's Street
Dublin 1
Office Hours: 9.00 am - 5 pm Monday - Friday

Hepatitis C Insurance Scheme

Mr. John Dwyer, Administrator
Ms. Michelle Hayes, Deputy Administrator

2nd Floor, HSE Offices
Mill Lane
Palmerstown
Dublin 20.
Tel Lo-call 1850 211570
E-mail: insuranceinfo@hse.ie
Website: www.hepcinsurance.ie

The Hepatitis C Insurance Scheme was set up under the Hepatitis C Compensation Tribunal (Amendment) Act (No.22) of 2006. This Scheme will enable persons with State Acquired Hepatitis C and/or HIV to take out Life insurance as if they were not infected. The Scheme provides for three different types of Insurance Cover to be taken out; Life Assurance, Mortgage Protection Cover and Travel Insurance.

Consultative Council on Hepatitis C Secretariat

2nd Floor, Health Service Executive,
Mill Lane, Palmerstown, Dublin 20.
Tel: (01) 6201708
Fax: (01) 6200032
E-mail: info@consultativecouncilonhepc.ie
Website: www.consultativecouncilonhepc.ie

Hepatitis C and HIV Compensation Tribunal

Iceland House
Arran Court
Arran Quay
Dublin 7
Tel: (01) 872 9255
Fax: (01) 872 9454
E-mail: info@hepccomptrib.com
Website: www.hepccomptrib.com

Department of Health and Children

Hawkins House
Hawkins Street
Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 6354000
Fax: (01) 6354001
Website: www.doh.ie

National Haemophilia Council

HSE Offices
Mill Lane, Palmerstown
Dublin 20
Tel 01 6201708
E-mail info@nationalhaemophiliacouncil.ie
Website www.nationalhaemophiliacouncil.ie

Department of Social and Family Affairs

Information Services
Áras Mhic Dhiarmada
Store Street
Dublin 1
LoCall: 1890 66 22 44
Leaflet request line: 1890 20 23 25
Website: www.welfare.ie

Revenue Commissioners

Telephone Information:
Dublin Region 1890 33 34 25
Border Midlands West Region 1890 77 74 25
South West Region 1890 22 24 25
East and South East Region 1890 44 44 25
Website: www.revenue.ie

Acupuncture Foundation of Ireland

Tel: (01) 8574040 Callsave: 1850 5774 05
Website: www.acupuncturefoundation.com

Irish Osteopathic Association

Tel: Secretary (01) 4905818
Treasurer (091) 589417

Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists in Ireland

Tel: (01) 2024939

Irish Chiropodists/Podiatrists Organisation

Tel: (01) 838 0556 or (01) 8680708

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Institute of Chiropodists and Podiatrists in Ireland

Tel: (01) 6268548

Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists

Royal College of Surgeons,
St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland.

Tel: (01) 402 21 48

Fax: (01) 402 21 60

E-mail: info@iscp.ie

Arthritis Ireland

1 Clanwilliam Square, Grand Canal Quay,
Dublin 2.

tel. 01 661 8188

fax. 01 661 8261

E-mail: info@arthritisireland.ie

Website: www.arthritisireland.ie

The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland

18 Shrewsbury Road,
Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, Ireland.

tel 01 1 2184000

E-mail: info@pharmaceuticalsociety.ie

Website: www.pharmaceuticalsociety.ie

Irish Medical Organisation

Tel. 01 6767 273

Health Service Executive

Head Office, Sr. Steeven's Hospital
Dublin 8

Tel 6352000

Website: www.hse.ie



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

(To be completed by HAA cardholder and returned to Liaison Officer if changing address)

To: Hepatitis C Liaison Officer

From: _____

HAA Card no: R_____

I wish to advise that I have recently changed address and no longer reside at

My new address is as follows

Please complete the above form and return to your local Liaison Officer if you have moved or are planning on moving address.

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Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

NOTIFICATION OF LOST/MISPLACED HAA Card

(to be completed by HAA cardholder if HAA card is lost/misplaced)

To: **Hepatitis C Liaison Officer**

From: _____

Address _____

HAA Card no **R**_____

I wish to advise the HSE that I have lost/misplaced my HAA card and would like to request a new card. I understand that my R number will now be cancelled and I will be issued with a new card with a new R Number.

Signed _____

Please complete/detach this form and return to your Hepatitis C Liaison Officer to report a lost/misplaced card and to request a new one.