

Irish Cancer Society - Budget 2017 Submission



We, at the Irish Cancer Society, know thanks to the many brave patients, survivors, families and carers who share their stories with us, that there is huge physical and psychological impact on a person who is diagnosed and treated with cancer, and often, this can impact on their family too.

What is often forgotten when speaking about the life-changing impact of a cancer diagnosis, is the financial toll it can take on individuals and families, which, for some, can be as stressful as a diagnosis itself.

Our “Real Cost of Cancer” report, published in October 2015, highlighted the broad range of costs not immediately apparent until someone receives their diagnosis.

Overall the cost of cancer is immense and we have made a conservative estimate that it **costs patients €862 per month**, rising to €1,200 in some cases. This is discounting the €1,400 a month drop in income faced by three in five cancer patients.

This shows the very considerable financial burden cancer patients and families face on their journey.

Many of the costs incurred are not covered by a medical card or private health insurance.

In Budget 2017, the Irish Cancer Society is calling on Government to put in place its recommendations to improve the lives of cancer patients. The proposals outlined in our submission, if implemented, would benefit the entire cancer population, saving medical card holders up to €300 a year, and non-medical card holders up to €1450 a year.

We are asking that:

- **Prescription charges are abolished** so that those on low incomes and people who are battling illness and the psychological and physical stress it brings are supported (Cost: €120 million)
- **The Drugs Payment Scheme monthly reimbursement threshold is reduced to €85** a month to alleviate the financial burden of medical expenses for families and individuals without a medical card who have large ongoing medical expenses (Cost: €64 million)
- **Inpatient charges are abolished** to ease the financial burden on cancer patients undergoing treatment (Cost: €17.7 million)

We urge the Government to implement the proposals set out in our submission so that the financial burden of a cancer diagnosis is reduced, so that hard-pressed families and individuals can afford to get by, and so that patients no longer have to face every day dilemmas such as choosing between paying for their child's medication or their own.

Our proposals will also benefit non-cancer patients on low incomes and people dealing with high medical costs, along with those who have neither a medical card nor private health insurance coverage.