

**01 October 2007**

## **Millions left unclaimed in nursing home refund scheme - Kennedy**

LESS THAN half of the people or hereditary estates eligible for refunds from the HSE for nursing home overcharging have applied to get their money back, revealed Dublin North Deputy Michael Kennedy who has urged all those suspected of being overcharged to contact the HSE urgently.

Deputy Kennedy said: "Many people don't realise that refund applications must be submitted by December 31, 2007 and I have been told that there could be more than 30,000 people to date who have not claimed back their money."

"To date, nearly 6,000 repayment offers totaling €111m have been made to members of the public and the HSE has made over 3,000 payments since the repayment scheme's launch in August 2006. This is out of around 60,000 people or their estates which are understood to be eligible for the refund scheme."

"A further 11,000 applications have been lodged and are being processed, with another 2000 being discarded on eligibility grounds."

"Around €66m has been paid out in refunds so far with the average repayment topping €20,000."

"The repayment scheme was launched by the Minister for Health Mary Harney after it was discovered that local health board had levied illegal charges upon patients using public nursing homes or public beds in private facilities."

"All those who were illegally charged and are alive and the estates of all those who were charged and died in the 6 years prior to the 9th December 2004, are eligible to have their charges repaid in full. The payments also allow for inflation and will be exempt from tax repayments."

Deputy Kennedy concluded: "Anyone affected or who believes they may be entitled to make a claim may register a claim with the Health Service Executive by writing to the National Refund Scheme, Health Service Executive, Midland Area, Arden Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly. They may also register by e-mail to Refund Schemes at [www.mailq.hse.ie](mailto:www.mailq.hse.ie) or by calling the helpline at 1800-77-77-37 during office hours."