

20 March 2020

## "On Call" for Ireland

During this time of crisis, the HSE is appealing for healthcare professionals to be "on-call" for Ireland. As you know, the Medisec Master Policy, underwritten by Allianz, provides you with indemnity cover for normal GP work. GPs may in the coming weeks and months be asked to work or they may volunteer to undertake additional duties that would not ordinarily constitute normal GP work to support the government's plans to manage COVID-19. In those circumstances, the State Claims Agency has confirmed it will provide indemnity cover for all COVID-19 related work under the Clinical Indemnity Scheme. This includes GPs working with the National Ambulance Service, the National Emergency Operations Centres, in hospitals, respiratory hubs and/or A&E settings.

It has also been confirmed that retired doctors returning to practise will be indemnified by the State under the Clinical Indemnity Scheme for COVID -19 related work but are reminded that they must first be on the Medical Register.

As the Clinical Indemnity Scheme does not include additional benefits such as advisory services or assistance with Medical Council complaints, Medisec is happy to offer those services on a discretionary basis to our retired members and to our current members for matters arising out of COVID-19 work.

Generally speaking, GPs should only perform tasks with which they feel competent and must satisfy themselves that they are not acting beyond their expertise. We understand that COVID-19 is creating highly challenging circumstances in which healthcare professionals are forced to operate. If in those circumstances, a GP is asked to perform a duty they would not normally undertake, they need to consider and assess whether they are competent to proceed, taking into account the patient's best interests. If they decide it is outside their competency to undertake a task, this should be communicated to whoever asked them to perform the task. The decision-making process and the reasons for the conclusion should be recorded where possible. Good record keeping more than ever will be so important to help protect GPs during this difficult time.

Medisec will be available 24/7 to assist and support you in whatever way we can in these difficult times.



## Top Tips for Video & Telephone Consultations

We appreciate that these are extremely challenging and unprecedented times for all GPs and their colleagues and we are here to offer advice and support. The COVID 19 pandemic is changing the way GP practices operate on a daily basis. We are aware that GPs are likely to be carrying out consultations by telephone / video link with patients on a more frequent basis as matters stand. Members have asked us to confirm that cover is in place for such remote consultations and Allianz plc, your underwriter,

has confirmed that their policy will operate in circumstances of remote consultations once up-to-date guidance from the HSE is followed.

Here are a few quick tips for remote telephone / video link consultations to ensure you are providing the best service to your patients while protecting yourselves in such challenging circumstances.

[Read More](#)

## Other Useful Information

- Given the ever-changing public health issue, we are advising members to follow the updated advice of the HSE/HPSC/ICGP/IMO or contact them with specific queries regarding Coronavirus / Covid 19 threats and the changes to GP practices. Their advice is updated regularly and they are in the best position to advise GPs and practice staff, including providing clinical advice which we are unfortunately not in a position to do.
- GPIT, through the ICGP, has issued helpful advice on teleconferencing for the Covid-19 Pandemic dated 13 March 2020, detailing useful tips on what GPs need to successfully teleconference. This update is available to members through the ICGP.
- The HSE has fully endorsed the Video Consultation Service available through [nuahealth.com](http://nuahealth.com) which is being used by over 750,000 patients across Europe. The service is GDPR compliant, secure and encrypted, works on any computer, smartphone or tablet and your contact details stay private. Visit [nuahealth.com](http://nuahealth.com) for more information.

## Confidentiality and COVID – 19

On 27 February 2020, COVID – 19 was added to the list of notifiable diseases, and SARS-CoV–2 to the list of notifiable causative agents in Ireland. This means that all medical practitioners, including clinical directors of diagnostic laboratories, are required to notify the Medical Officer of Health (MOH)/Director of Public Health (DPH) of all cases of COVID-19. The relevant case definitions including case classifications can be found at: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/casedefinitions/>

- Practitioners are required to complete specific surveillance forms which can be found at <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/surveillance/>. The surveillance forms require disclosure of personal and clinical information of patients and their contacts.
- When a notification is to be made, where possible, patients should be informed of the requirement. If a patient objects to the notification, this objection should be noted in the patient's records, however the practitioner is obliged to carry out the notification and should take time to explain to the patient the importance of public health surveillance.

## Contact Details

- Due to public health advice regarding Coronavirus (COVID-19), in the interests of public and staff safety, we have taken the decision to close our office and our staff members will work remotely. We can assure you that we will continue to provide a full service for our members and we remain available 24/7 to answer any query you may have. If you are already liaising with our team members, they will be in contact with you directly.

- Should you have a query, please e-mail us in the first instance at [info@medisec.ie](mailto:info@medisec.ie) and a member of the Medisec team will respond to you. We ask that you please do not send any documentation of importance, such as an application form for example, to our office by post as post will not be checked on a daily basis for the time being.



We wish you all well in these difficult and challenging times. Please look after yourselves, your loved ones and your colleagues and continue to follow the guidelines provided by the health authorities. For all queries, no matter how small, please do not hesitate to contact our team; read more for all our details.

Warmest regards in these challenging times,  
Ruth and all the Medisec team.

[Read More](#)

## Get in touch

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any ideas or suggestions for work that you would like to see us do. We love to hear from our members!

**Call us on:**  
1800 460 400 or +353 1 6610504

**Email us:**  
General [info@medisec.ie](mailto:info@medisec.ie)  
Ruth Shipsey, CEO [ruthshipsey@medisec.ie](mailto:ruthshipsey@medisec.ie)

**Write to:**  
Medisec Ireland,  
7 Hatch Street Lower,  
Dublin 2,  
Ireland.

**Opening hours:**  
Office opening hours 8am - 5.30pm  
Monday – Friday for all your advisory,  
membership, ethical or medico legal  
queries.



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