

Illness certification – “Certs”

PRSI certs (social welfare certs) are used by an employee to claim back some illness benefit via their previous PRSI contributions to the state. Some employers may process that request for their employees, but most leave it to the employee to process it themselves directly, as they feel it is their employees' affair and not theirs.

The state, PRSI dept of social welfare, later on, pays the GP a fee for each PRSI cert processed through them. €8.

The PRSI cert is free to the patient at the point of being issued - in the GP surgery. No fee is charged for same, This is regardless of whether the patient has a medical card or not.

It is my practice to have repeat certs given by the doctor (in person) to the patient (in person) only, and **not to someone on their behalf**. I do this in between other patients' appointments. Rare exceptions are made, but only in exceptional situations, and only for medical reasons. Please do not get upset with reception staff. They are only following my instructions. Maximum waiting time, usually, is until I finish the consultation with the current patient. To allow us prepare the cert to minimise delay on yourself, please phone in advance of coming down to collect it.

Repeat certs can only be issued on the day they are due, or in arrears. The PRSI department forbids me from issuing them in advance.

Fees apply in the following situations

1) First cert. **Where someone has no medical card**, AND, an initial consultation is required, for the GP to satisfy him/herself that they have examined the patient, and that the patient is unfit for work.

A standard consultation fee applies here. There is no charge for the PRSI cert. If a private first cert is also issued here, there is no additional fee to the consultation fee. The charge is for the consultation to be able to certify, not the actual cert itself.

Subsequent, follow on, PRSI certs (if still required) may not necessitate a full consultation appointment. No additional fee applies, if that is the case.

2) Subsequent certs. Where an employer insists on a "work place" certificate (also known as a private cert) in addition to the PRSI cert. The practice is not paid for same and charges a fee for same. This is irrespective of whether someone has a medical card or not. This is a cost imposed on the patient by the employer to meet their HR needs. This cost has not been imposed by the GP. The GP is charging for non PRSI, non medical card work.

I advise all my patients seeking a private cert, in addition to the PRSI cert, to ask their employer to accept sight of, and make a copy of the original PRSI cert, in lieu of a “work place / private cert”. This is to prevent extra unnecessary cost on my patients (their employees). This would meet their HR needs, and not incur a cost on you in the surgery for such a “work place / private” cert.

Please ask your employer to consider this fact, if they insist on separate private certs, as these extra certs incur a cost on you, which is hard to bear, particularly at a time when you are out of paid employment.

If anyone has difficulty explaining this to their employer, please show them this explanatory leaflet. Most employers are reasonable. It might save you money.

Your employer, not myself, holds the key here, to saving you on costs.

I do not issue illness certificates for primary or secondary school absences. Parents supply explanatory notes for schools. Should a school require a medical report, they can write to me requesting same. In that case, they will need to include written authorisation from yourself, for me to break confidentiality. A medical report fee will apply.