



The Health Insurance Authority (HIA) is a statutory regulator of the private health insurance market in Ireland.

Market Figures

There were 2,163,000 people insured with inpatient health insurance plans at the end of December 2011. This represents a reduction in the number of insured people of 9,000 over the quarter and 66,000 over the year. The number of people insured has been in decline since it peaked at almost 2.3 million at the end of 2008.

In addition to those insured with inpatient plans, there were 103,000 insured with products solely providing outpatient benefits or health insurance cash plans.

Private health insurance in-patient plans	Total Insured 000's
Dec 2008	2,297
Dec 2009	2,260
Dec 2010	2,228
Mar 2011	2,214
Jun 2011	2,184
Sep 2011	2,172
Dec 2011	2,163

Based on preliminary census results, the percentage of the population with inpatient health insurance plans currently stands at 47.2%.

Premiums Paid

Total health insurance premiums paid in 2011 amounted to €2.03bn, an increase of 4% from 2010. The average premium paid per insured person in 2011 was €926, an increase of 6% from 2010.

Recent Product Developments

Aviva Health

The premium of Business Plan Select + also increased on 1 January 2012. Adult premiums increased from €811.40 to €910.70 per adult. Child and student prices also increased. Aviva Health increased the premium of Business Plan Hospital + on the same date. Adult premiums increased from €757.70 to €765.10 per adult. Child and student prices also increased.

Family Value Plan (€850 for adults) was released on 15 February 2012. This plan provides cover for a private room in a public hospital subject to an excess of €125. It also covers a semi private room in a private hospital subject to a €250 excess for in-patient stays. Day-case claims are subject to a €125 excess in private hospitals. Children are currently free under this plan.

Quinn Healthcare

Quinn Healthcare has a special offer of free child and student cover on their Essential Select plan from 18 February 2012 to 19 March 2012 inclusive.

Vhi Healthcare

Vhi Healthcare have a special offer of free child cover on the One + Plan and Parents and Kids Plans from 15 February - 16 March 2012 inclusive.

Vhi Healthcare made a number of changes to the prices and benefits provided under products in its PMI range. Details of these changes are available at www.hia.ie.



General Price Increases

Vhi Healthcare increased the cost of 42 plans by an average of 1.9% on 22 November 2011. This included the HealthPlus Scheme, the Parents and Kids Scheme, the Lifestages Scheme (apart from One plan and One+ plan) and the Company plan Scheme.

The premiums of 16 Vhi Healthcare PMI plans were increased in December 2011 and January 2012. The price increase for adults ranged from 1.4% to 15%.

Vhi Healthcare has announced price increases that range from 6% -12.5% with the effective date of the price change being either 1 March or 17 March 2012 depending on plan.

Quinn Healthcare increased the premiums of 19 plans on 1 January 2012. The adult premiums increased by 7% - 25%. Its Corporate plans prices increased on 1 February 2012 by 2% - 25%.

Aviva have announced a price increase of 15% that applies to individual plans from 15 February and for corporate plans from 1 March 2012.

Quinn Healthcare ownership

On 23 December 2011, Quinn Healthcare announced the successful completion of talks between the Quinn Group, Quinn Healthcare management and Elips Insurances Ltd (which is wholly owned by Swiss Re), regarding the sale of Quinn's health insurance business.

The announcement referred both to the sale of Quinn Healthcare Ltd (the company that sells and administers health insurance policies for Quinn Insurance Ltd (under administration)) and to underwriting arrangements for Quinn's health insurance customers.

Under the agreed arrangement, existing health insurance policyholders with Quinn Insurance Ltd (under administration) will continue to be insured by that company until their next renewal date, as will policyholders who purchase a policy before Elips Insurances Ltd enters the market. When Elips Insurances Ltd enters the market, Quinn Insurance Ltd (under administration) will cease to sell or renew health insurance policies and policyholders will be invited to renew their contracts with Elips Insurances Ltd on their renewal dates.

It was also announced that Irish management (with the backing of Swiss Re) were successful in their bid for Quinn Healthcare Ltd in Cork, which will sell and administer the policies on behalf of Elips Insurances Ltd.

Age Related Tax Credits and Community Rating Stamp Duty 2012 Renewals

In late 2011, the Authority advised the Minister for Health on the level of age related tax credits and Community Rating Stamp Duty for 2012. After considering the Authority's advice, the Government amended the levels of Age Related Tax Credits and Stamp Duty as set out in the following table.

<i>Tax Credits</i>	<i>2012</i>
60 - 64	€600
65 - 69	€975
70 - 74	€1,400
75 - 79	€2,025
80 - 84	€2,400
85 +	€2,700

<i>Stamp Duty</i>	
Adult	€285
Child	€95

The Age related tax credits support community rating by meeting part of the higher claims cost incurred in respect of insuring older people. These credits are funded through the Community Rating Stamp Duty which is paid by all insurers. The measure is designed to be Exchequer neutral.

Website

The Authority had over 46,000 visitors to the site in December and this increased to nearly 69,000 visitors in January, reflecting the high level of renewals during this period. The large majority of visitors visited the website to use our plan comparison tool which provides consumer friendly comparisons of all products in the market. The increase in website visitors during this period was also mirrored in our calls, which doubled during this time.