



DIRECTORATE FOR PHARMACEUTICAL AFFAIRS
Department of Health
Ministry for Health, the Elderly and Community Care

DPA Memo 01/2012: Schedule V reform and Diabetes mellitus management

Patients are entitled to free medicinal treatment by virtue of the [Social Security Act Cap 318 Article 23](#) and the Fifth Schedule of the same Act. The Fifth Schedule covers a total of seventy-nine conditions. Any patient suffering from a chronic condition which is listed under the second part of the Fifth Schedule of the Social Security Act is entitled to free medication for that specific disease and entitlement is based solely upon the presence of disease irrespective of means, income or age. In order to become entitled to receive free medications under the Schedule V scheme, patients suffering from the listed conditions must be referred to a Consultant within the Government Health Service. The Consultant can [apply for a Schedule V card](#) for the patient, listing the medicines required by the patient. Such cards cannot be transferred from one patient to another. The Schedule V card is issued from the [Medicines Entitlement Unit, St. Luke's Hospital](#). Patients holding Schedule V cards are only entitled to those medicines and medical supplies/consumables listed on the card. Patients suffering from different chronic conditions usually have more than one card.

To improve patient care, a change in prescriber criteria has been made. All Medical Practitioners, i.e. doctors working within the National Health Services and private doctors, can change the dose of treatment for the below mentioned conditions when an item is marked on the formulary as 'Medical Practitioners' or 'Consultant'. This includes also **protocol-regulated medicines** (medicines that require a permit/approval).

1. Hypertension
2. Diabetes Mellitus
3. Chronic Heart Failure
4. Asthma
5. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
6. Treatment for hypercholesterolaemia under the respective Schedule V conditions
7. Chronic Mood Disorders
8. Chronic Neurotic Disorders

Medicines Entitlement Unit, Directorate Pharmaceutical Affairs, MHEC, St. Luke's Hospital, G'Mangia.

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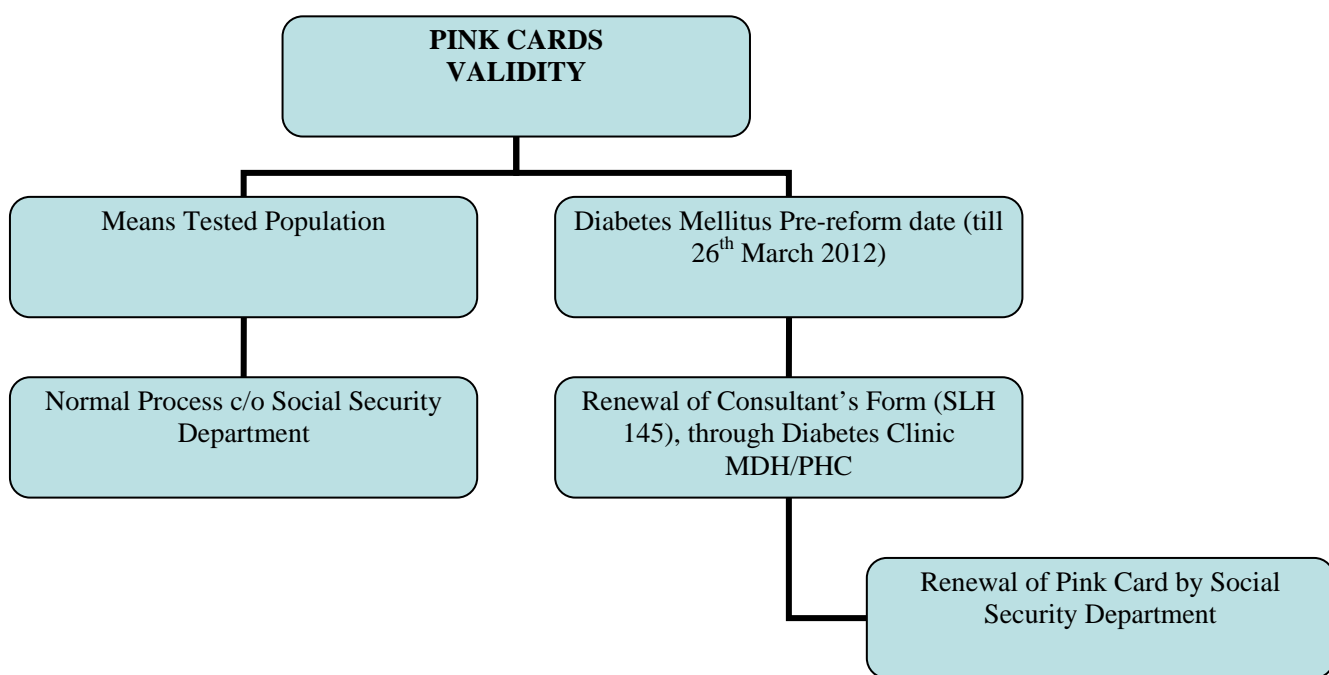
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Schedule II (Pink Cards)

Those patients suffering from chronic conditions fall under **Schedule V** (Yellow Card), whilst those with limited means generally pertain to the **Schedule II** (Pink Card). Pink card holders are entitled to a limited number of medicinal products, which are specifically **marked as pink card positive** on the Government Formulary List.



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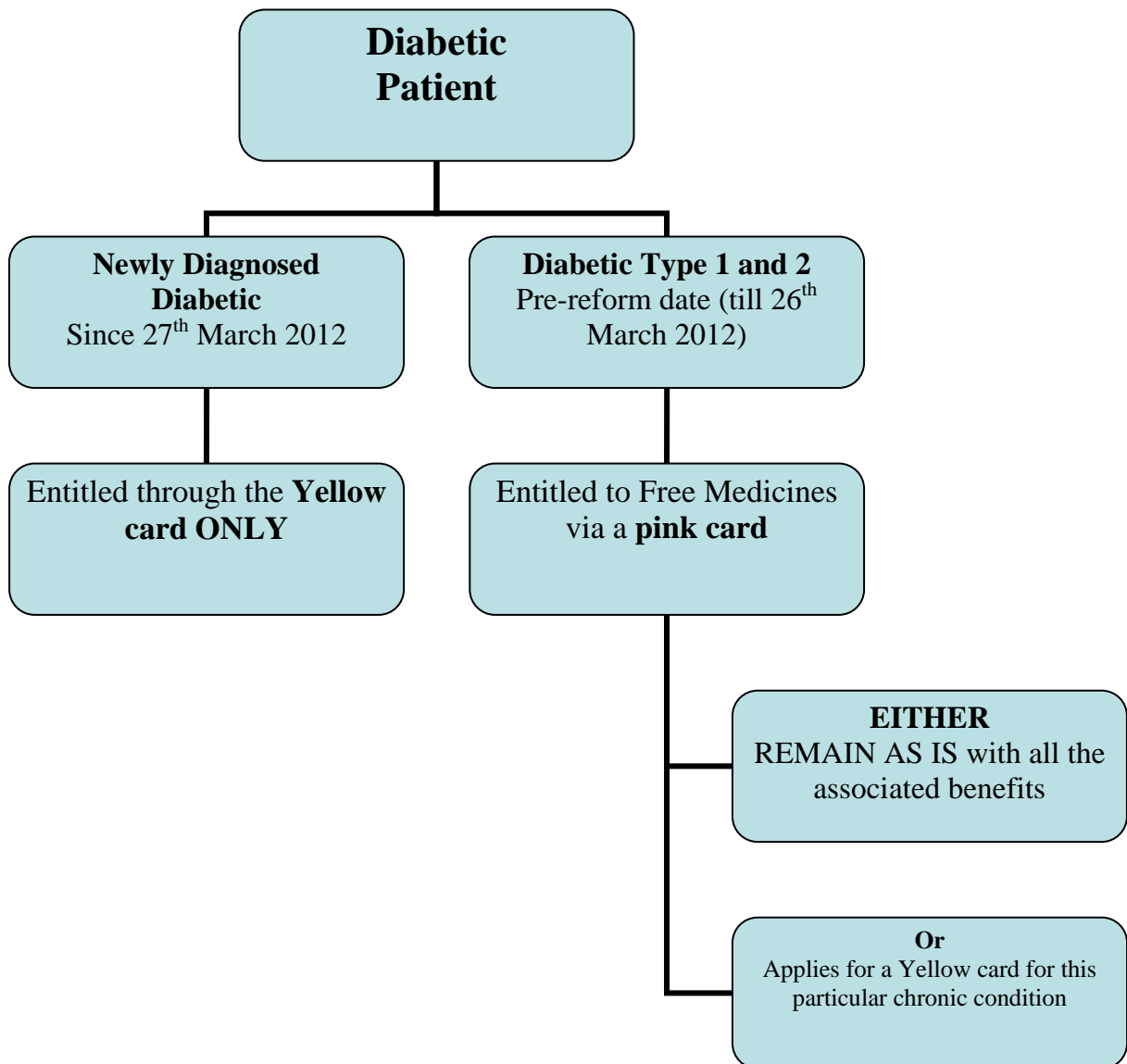
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Diabetes mellitus: Free medicine entitlement



As per algorithm, diabetic patients already having a pink card can opt to either remain as is or else opt for the yellow card. However, new patients can only apply for a Schedule V (yellow) card.

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Nothing has changed for those who opt to retain the pink card, so the patients will also be entitled to other benefits besides medicines such as nappies, telecare rebates, spectacles, etc. Those diabetic patients retaining the pink card, and who are not means tested, will not be able to apply for the yellow card for the diabetic condition. Patients opting for the Schedule V (yellow) card will not have the current pink card benefits, unless they are also means tested.

However those opting to apply for the Schedule V (yellow) card will have the following benefits:

- a. Type 1 diabetic patients will be entitled to a Blood glucose meter and Blood glucose test strips **independent of their age**
- b. Syringes quota will be **thirty (30) per month**
- c. **Related treatment** to diabetes management such as, medicines used to manage neuropathic pain and infections etc.; and the associated medical supplies/consumables such as catheters, dressings etc. will also be listed on this card.
- d. **New oral medications and insulin treatment** pertaining to direct and related management will *only* be given on this card

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Applying for the Schedule V card process:

1. Those patients who opt to apply for the Schedule V card and who are in possession of a Consultant Form ([SLH 145](#)) and who do not require any change in their current stabilized treatment will need to be referred to a medical practitioner.
2. The medical practitioner would need to verify that the Consultant form ([SLH 145](#)) is valid:
 - ✓ Appropriately filled in
 - ✓ Legible
 - ✓ Endorsed by: Prof. S. Fava, Prof. J. Azzopardi, Prof. J. Vassallo, Dr. M. Cachia, Dr. J. Torpiano, Dr. A. Ellul, and Dr. R. Sciberras, Dr. V. Curmi, and Dr. V. Svejda (Consultants in Gozo).
 - ✓ Valid expiry date
 - ✓ Expired form will still be accepted: If the Consultant form ([SLH 145](#)) was issued *after 1st January 2010* and has not been renewed in the last 2 years or so.
3. The medical practitioner would need to endorse such requests by attaching a covering letter stating the current specific treatment.
 - ✓ The medicines need to be listed using the generic names e.g. glibenclamide, gliclazide.
 - ✓ Medicines which usually need a special permit (previously known as non-formulary) should still be listed.
 - ✓ The covering letter filled by the medical practitioner including the valid Consultant form ([SLH 145](#)) should be sent directly to the Medicines Entitlement Unit, MHEC, St. Luke's Hospital, G'Mangia.

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4. If the Consultant form ([SLH 145](#)) is **not valid** or in the case of **new patients**, the medical practitioner should **refer the patient with a ticket of referral**, to the Diabetes clinics at Mater Dei Hospital/Primary Health Care. Patients who opt for the switch over should keep on receiving regular treatment during the allocated transition period.

Further Information:

In view of the new Schedule V reform, and the large number of patients availing from this system, small groups' information sessions will be held. Interested persons can send their contact details via email to Ms. Alison Anastasi, Principal Pharmacist, Directorate for Pharmaceutical Affairs, on the generic email: schedulev.mhec@gov.mt.

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