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**Compensation payments for Hep C and HIV will not be included in eligibility tests for social welfare payments**

**– Mary Coughlan Minister for Social and Family Affairs**

Compensation payments made to victims by the Hepatitis C and HIV compensation tribunals will be disregarded in assessments for social welfare purposes, said Social and Family Affairs Minister, Mary Coughlan, today.

The new regulations will also apply to compensation payments made to people by a court of competent jurisdiction who have contracted HIV through contaminated blood products.

”I am pleased to sign these new regulations into effect as a significant support for people, “said Minister Coughlan.

“Through the evidence provided to the Tribunals and courts we have all come to know of the tragedy suffered by these people and I would expect that the further easing of my Department’s regulations will provide a significant support for people who have to claim social welfare supports, “said Minister Coughlan.

Regulations already in effect provide that any moneys received by way of compensation awarded to persons who have contracted Hepatitis C and to persons who have disabilities caused by Thalidomide will be



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disregarded in the assessment of means for all Social Assistance schemes and Supplementary Welfare Allowances – this includes schemes such as unemployment assistance and disability allowance.

**ENDS July 25<sup>th</sup> 2003**