Dr Liam Twomey TD  
Dail Eireann  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2  

12th March 2007  

REF: PQ 624/07  

Dear Dr Twomey,  

I refer to the above parliamentary question which was referred by the Minister to the HSE and by the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the HSE to me.  

“To ask the Minister for Health and Children the number of Linear accelerators delivered to date under the radiation oncology service plan; the location of this technology; if it is operational and if She will make a statement on the matter”.

The National Plan for Radiation Oncology published by the government in July 2005 and communicated at that time to the HSE by the Department of Health and Children did not envisage that any additional linear accelerator capacity would be in place by this time. I attach a copy of the government announcement for your information. It is anticipated that two additional linear accelerators will be commissioned at St. Luke’s Hospital Rathgar, prior to the end of 2007. Work is well advanced on site in order to achieve this.  

The development of interim facilities on the campuses of St. James’s Hospital, Dublin 8 and Beaumont Hospital, Dublin 9 taking the form of two linear accelerators and associated treatment planning and support facilities is currently under procurement and it is anticipated that these facilities will become operational in the first quarter of 2009. The Deputy may be aware that, at the request of the HSE, these developments were excluded from the original Plan to procure them by PPP and the development is now proceeding by way of a conventional procurement. All of the remaining elements of the National Plan for Radiation Oncology are currently in planning phase and there is currently discussion between the HSE and the Department of Health and Children concerning the most appropriate procurement methodology to achieve an on-time completion of the project.
In addition to physical facilities the HSE is paying particular and considerable attention to the requirement to plan for workforce requirements and to this end a number of developments are currently underway including the appointment of six(6) additional Consultant radiation oncologists, expected to be appointed this year, the appointment of six(6) new SpR’s in radiation oncology as part of our longer range workforce planning, and the development of a cross-border training programme for radiation oncology physicists.

I trust that the foregoing information is useful. Should you have any further enquiries please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Yours sincerely,

Tony O'Brien
Project Director

Cc: Sabrina Keela, Parliamentary Affairs Division HSE,