30th July 2009

PQ No: 26490/09
To ask the Minister for Health and Children the number of persons on the waiting list for a heart transplant; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

PQ No: 26491/09
To ask the Minister for Health and Children the number of patients on the waiting list for lung transplants; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

PQ No: 26492/09
To ask the Minister for Health and Children the number of single lung transplants carried out here from 2000 to date in 2009 on an annual basis in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

PQ No: 26493/09
To ask the Minister for Health and Children the number of double lung transplants carried out here from 2000 to date in 2009 on an annual basis in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

- Mary Upton

Dear Deputy Upton,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions (Reference No: 26490/09; 26491/09; 26492/09; 26493/09), which you submitted to the Minister for Health and Children for response. I propose to answer these four questions together.
The National Heart and Lung Transplant programme at the Mater Hospital has been in place for a number of years. This programme services patients with a variety of conditions including Cystic Fibrosis.

The Deputy will be aware Ireland has a formal agreement with the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle for Heart/Lung transplantation procedures. In relation to organ donations, the protocol is that all heart/lung donor organs are first offered to the transplant unit at the Mater Hospital. If these organs cannot be utilised by the Mater Group, the National co-ordinators notify the Freeman Hospital as appropriate.

### Heart Lung Transplant Programme

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<tr>
<th>Waiting List as of July 2009</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Patients on Irish Lung Transplant Waiting List</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of Patients on Newcastle Lung Transplant Waiting List</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of Patients on Heart Transplant Waiting List</td>
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<th>Number of Lung Transplants to date – July 2009</th>
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<tr>
<td>Single Lung Transplants</td>
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<td>Double Lung Transplants</td>
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Finding suitable organs for the Heart and Lung programme is always a challenge and while Ireland has a good donation rate there are very complex clinical and psychological issues to be considered when recovering organs.

The Deputy may be aware that the National Health Strategy, Quality and Fairness identified the need for further development of transplant services. As part of this, the HSE has undertaken to conduct a review of donor organ procurement and practices. A working group was set up in 2006 to undertake the above and the Terms of Reference (TOR) are to:

1. Conduct a review of organ procurement practices and governance in heart beating donors in Irish hospitals (solid organs) and compare this with best international practice.
2. Correlate the procurement versus transplant rates of donated organs in Ireland.
3. Review the practice in relation to transplant services nationally for each of the major organs including patient selection, governance, performance monitoring.

To address point no. 1 in the Terms of Reference, the group considered it necessary to audit the potential for organ donation. The field work in relation to this audit has been completed. The objectives of the audit include identifying the number of brain stem dead patients who become donors and also to identify any obstacles to the process of donation. It is anticipated that the findings of this work will be published in the Autumn.

The Deputy may be aware that the HSE 2008 service plan included a commitment in relation to the Mater Heart Lung Programme as follows:

“Formal external review of Mater programme completed”.

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In this regard, draft Terms of Reference have been drawn up by HSE Population Health to incorporate such a review into a proposed review of practices in relation to transplant services nationally.

I trust this clarifies the situation for you.

Kind Regards

Robert Kidd
A/Hospital Network Manager