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03rd January 2020

**Deputy John Curran, T.D.,
Dail Eireann,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.**

Dear Deputy Curran,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to your Parliamentary Question below which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

PQ Ref: 52344/19- “To ask the Minister for Health if the uptake of hepatitis C treatment has been increased during 2019”

Since 2015 the National Hepatitis C Treatment programme has provided treatment to over 3700 patients beginning with those most in critical need. The NHCTP has observed a marked decline in numbers of newly diagnosed infections in recent years and a significant increase in the numbers of patients successfully completing treatment. At the end of November 1142 clients have commenced treatment.

In order to meet the changing needs in hepatitis C care for patients the Programme’s current focus is to seek and treat the harder to reach client groups. In this regard the programme continues the extension of hepatitis C treatment away from the traditional hospital based healthcare to a number of HSE Addiction Treatment Centres. In tandem the programme continues to expand the treatment availability within the community setting outside of Opioid Substitution Treatment (OST) clinics. Initial outcomes from these programmes are extremely positive with each patient engaging fully with their treatment and for those who have completed their treatment they have each received a sustained virological response i.e. a cure.

The Health Service Executive is committed to ensuring that treatment is offered to patients with Hepatitis C in line with the National Hepatitis C Treatment Programme’s goal of eliminating Hepatitis C by 2026.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Crowley'.

**Geraldine Crowley,
Assistant National Director,
Primary Care Strategy and Planning**