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28th June, 2019.

**Deputy Willie Penrose, T.D.,
Dail Eireann,
Kildare St.,
Dublin 2.**

Dear Deputy Penrose,

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:- 25907/19 - To ask the Minister for Health if, in view of the unacceptable delays for cataract surgery and limited services for children with ophthalmology issues, he will consider the roll out of the Sligo cataract scheme nationally with optometrists and hospital eye departments working together and further permit the roll out of a national scheme to enable children that do not need medical or surgical management to be examined in the community by optometrists; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Willie Penrose.

Response:

The Primary Care Eye Services Review Group (PCESRG) Report was launched on 28th June, 2017. The Report sets out the current levels of service, models of service provision and the consultation process undertaken with patients, advocates, ophthalmic staff and representative bodies and sets out the way forward for a significant amount of eye services to be delivered in a Primary Care setting. The recommendations from the PCESRG Report also complement the Model of Care developed by the National Clinical Programme for Ophthalmology.

Many of the service developments that have led to increased efficiency in the ophthalmology service in the North West are encompassed in the recommendations in the Review of Primary Eye Care Services and those from the NCP Ophthalmology. Planning the implementation of the recommendations from the Review of Primary Eye Care Services is a key focus for primary care.

To date implementation of the Report has focused on establishing paediatric eye care teams in CHOs 6 & 7 as well as expanding the paediatric eye care team in CHO 9. These teams would include ophthalmologists, optometrists, orthoptists, nurses and technicians. Once established, they can take on the management of many eye conditions from acute ophthalmology services.

The three CHOs are due to recruit for a Consultant Medical Ophthalmologist for each of their CHOs to provide clinical governance to the eye care team. CHOs 6 & 7 are to commence the recruitment of the other eye care team staff in Q3 2019. CHO 9 has employed additional orthoptists and optometrists to expand their team. The progress of these teams will be reviewed to guide future rollout of teams across other parts of the country.

Implementation is also focusing on exploring the rollout of the Community Ophthalmic Services Scheme to children over 8 years.

Yours sincerely,

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