



Feidhmeannas Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Office of the Chief Information Officer
delivering eHealth Ireland,
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03rd May 2019

Deputy Michael Harty, T.D.
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Re: PQ Number 12026/19: "To ask the Minister for Health when a unique identifier will be introduced for patients here; and the reason for the delay in the introduction of same"

- Michael Harty.

Dear Deputy Harty,

I thank the Deputy for asking about the Individual Health Identifier (IHI) which is an important patient safety initiative and a fundamental part of my Department's eHealth strategy. It is the intention to embed the IHI into all health systems nationally, across multiple sites and as such, it is a project that will continue for several years. The sequencing of the candidate health systems that will have access to the IHI is determined by criteria such as that relating to clinical benefit resulting from the interaction of those systems with IHI included.

Since the passing of the Health Identifiers Act in 2014, there have been a number of important deliverables on the IHI including the commencement order for the operational use of the IHI throughout Ireland's healthcare system, the establishment of an IHI Register and the implementation of the IHI in eReferrals. Since May 2017 approximately 700,000 IHI numbers have been used for electronic referrals from GPs to Hospitals.

The IHI programme of work is continuing with deliverables under the 2019 Sláintecare Action Plan including the creation of an IHI Office to support the phasing in of the IHI across systems nationally. The setting up of that office is the subject of current engagement with my Department and the HSE. The roll-out of IHI will also be a key pillar of the Health Information System Strategy that the Department has committed to developing as a foundational part of Sláintecare Implementation linking the key areas needed to exploit knowledge and information in a modern health service.

If you have any further questions please do let me know.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fran Thompson".

Fran Thompson,
Interim Chief Information Officer.