

Health Service Executive
South/South-West Hospital Group,
University Hospital Kerry.
V92 NX94

Private & Confidential

30th September, 2019

Deputy Danny Healy Rae, TD,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare St, Dublin 2

PQ Number: 40121/19

Dear Deputy Healy Rae,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) – South (Cork & Kerry) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following Parliamentary Question, which was submitted to this office for response.

Details Supplied: What he proposes to do about the DEXA Scanner that is lying idle in University Hospital Kerry while patients have to travel to Cork to get MRI's done or have to pay to have scans done privately.

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health his plans for a scanner in University Hospital Kerry (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Danny Healy-Rae

The hospital is extremely grateful for the tremendous fundraising work which the Friends of University Hospital Kerry does and for the provision of the scanner in 2015 to meet an obvious and growing patient need. It is unfortunate that it has not been possible to staff the scanner in the manner which was originally envisaged. Unfortunately, despite constant national and international recruitment drives, University Hospital Kerry, has been unable to recruit a full complement of Radiographers to the department and consequently have been unable to restart this service. This recruitment challenge is not specific to UHK but reflected right across the country.

Hospital Management has asked Dr. Niamh Feely to look into this matter. She took on the role of Clinical Director earlier this year, and fully recognises the clinical need and the importance of the DEXA scanning service. She is actively working on this to see how soon we can get the service up and running again.

Dr. Feely has been in touch with the Irish Osteoporosis Society and through them with Prof John Carey in Galway who is expert in this field. With the Irish DEXA Society he is finalising the 2019-2020 training dates for DEXA operators and will send them to her as soon as available. Within the hospital we are currently seeking suitable staff members who may undertake this training other than radiographers whose staffing levels do not permit their involvement in the service at this time. Prof Carey is also advising Dr. Feely on the governance framework for DEXA services, which he says is in flux at the moment and is with Minister Harris for review. This review will look at the qualifications / categories of staff who may operate the service, as well as the consultant-level oversight.

We must make sure the clinical governance is robust and appropriate rather than risking recommencing a service only to have to close it because of governance issues. Once UHK has these two pieces of information we will be able to give you a further update.

I trust this response is to your satisfaction; should you have any further queries however, please do not hesitate to contact me

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fearghal Grimes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'F'.

Fearghal Grimes
General Manager
University Hospital Kerry