



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scaghástála National Screening Service

17 October 2019

Our ref: HM/Communications

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PQ 40232/19

To ask the Minister for Health the corrective and preventative actions that have been put in place under the Diabetic RetinaScreen Programme to ensure the correct results are issued to the correct patient, in a timely manner; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy

I refer to the above parliamentary question.

Diabetic RetinaScreen, the HSE National Diabetic Retinal Screening Programme, is a government funded programme that offers free, regular diabetic retinopathy screening to people who have diabetes aged 12 years and older.

Once participants have consented to take part in the programme they will be invited to attend for screening. There are in excess of 120 screening locations nationally.

A result letter will normally be sent to each person within three weeks of attending a screening appointment. This result letter will also be sent to their GP. This letter will advise the next steps. The above commitment is set out in the Standards for Quality Assurance in Diabetic Retinopathy Screening and measured as part of the service's objectives. The programme meets the target for this standard.

Most participants will have a normal result - i.e. they will have no retinopathy, or will have early changes to their retina and will be invited back for routine diabetic retinopathy screening in 12 months.

Participants will be contacted for a further appointment if:

- The photographs are not clear enough to give a result
- Diabetic retinopathy is detected which needs to be assessed
- Other eye conditions not caused by diabetes are detected and need to be assessed.

Result letters are generated once a participant has attended a screening appointment and received a final grade. The introduction of a failsafe process to ensure that patients receive correct and timely results has been reviewed and reinforced.

Following a recent review, the below recommendations were suggest and implemented across the programme.

Recommendation	Action
All patients who request a copy of the letter by email will receive the results letter within two business days of the request to their email address.	This recommendation has been implemented and is now part of the standard operating procedures with our providers.

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All patients who request a more detailed results letter will receive a copy of the GP letter.	This recommendation has been implemented and is now part of the standard operating procedures with our providers.
Switching off the Digital Surveillance Pathway linked to the pilot project; this option will prevent a reoccurrence in the future.	This issue was discussed with the software providers and it was agreed the pathway within the software for the pilot programme has been switched off.
Retraining of all grading staff to understand the correct screening pathways.	Northgate Public Services (formally EMIS Care), one of our service providers, confirmed all graders have been retrained.
The Diabetic RetinaScreen programme is to carry out an internal quality audit on all processes and procedures by end September 2019.	The Diabetic RetinaScreen programme has completed an internal quality audit in September 2019.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Celine Fitzgerald
Interim CEO
National Screening Service

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