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18<sup>th</sup> October, 2019.

Deputy Frank O'Rourke, T.D,  
Dail Eireann,  
Kildare St.,  
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy O'Rourke,

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 41133/19: 'To ask the Minister for Health his plans to meet patient demand and reduce public eye care waiting lists, which are growing year on year with waiting times of up to two years now standard; and if he will make a statement on the matter.'** -Frank O'Rourke

**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. Both the PCESRG and the model of care developed for Ophthalmology recommend the integration of hospital and community eye care services through Integrated Eye Care teams to address current waiting lists.

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. Future implementation plans include the rollout of adult eye care teams to help transition patient activity from the acute to primary care setting

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. These posts will be advertised in the coming weeks through our acute hospital partners and it is expected that interviews will be held in early November 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.

Yours sincerely,

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