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Deputy Pa Daly TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ / 43072/20 *to ask the Minister for Health the details of protocols in relation to staff wearing of masks within acute hospitals; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

Dear Deputy Daly,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The HSE adheres to NPHET decisions including decisions on wearing of masks. Staff adhere to Infection Prevention & Control (IP&C) guidance in relation to mask use when providing clinical services to patients. Appropriate personal protective equipment use, including masks is included in the Health Protection Surveillance Centre IPC guidance documents.

In addition, it has recently come to the attention of the HSE that members of the public and patients have expressed concern regarding the fact that they are wearing cloth face coverings in all public areas of healthcare facilities but that they see healthcare workers who are not wearing face coverings in these public areas.

The AMRIC Oversight Group considered and discussed this issue. Arising from the general guidance for the public on the use of masks, by all, in other settings e.g. retail shops, transport etc. it was agreed and is recommended that healthcare workers, in addition to current guidance on mask use, should be asked to wear masks when transiting through busy public areas of healthcare facilities in both the community and acute setting to address this public concern.

This will be included in HPSC guidance documents as they are updated

I trust this answers your question to your satisfaction.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Brennan
Assistant National Director
Quality & Patient Safety Lead | Acute Operations | HSE