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Deputy Colm Burke,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2.

25th January 2021

PQ Ref: 44315/20 - To ask the Minister for Health if consideration will be given to expanding access to diagnostic, radiology and laboratory services to allow timely access to investigations and results of same to general practitioners which will support them in appropriately managing patients in the community; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - Colm Burke

Dear Deputy Burke,

I refer to your recent parliamentary question which was passed to the HSE for response.

Primary Care Strategy & Planning continues to work closely with the Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs) to roll out increased GP direct access to ultrasound and x-ray.

A further rollout of increased GP direct access to diagnostics in the community has commenced on 18th January 2021. The first set of diagnostics to be rolled out is access to 94,000 radiology scans (additional x-ray, CT, MRI & DEXA) via private providers/ hospitals across the country. Plans are being finalised for the provision of the chronic disease diagnostics to also commence rollout in early 2021.

Further details on the increased access to diagnostics can be accessed here:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/2/primarycare/community-healthcare-networks/gp-diagnostics/>

In addition, Primary Care Strategy & Planning ran a tender exercise in Q4 2020 to establish a panel of providers to support hospitals in reducing their waiting lists of GP ultrasound referrals. 16 hospitals are currently engaging with the panel of providers to reduce their waiting lists by approximately 12,500 by Q2 2021.

Alongside the immediate service provision outlined above, the HSE is developing a longer term plan to establish diagnostic hubs in the community to support general practice.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Crowley', with a horizontal line underneath.

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