



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Príohóifigeach Cliniciúil Eatromhach
Ospidéal Dr Steevens
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By Email Only

Deputy Reada Cronin,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

15th July 2020

PQ 14509/20:

Question: To ask the Minister for Health if pulmonary rehabilitation will be widely and readily available for patients whose pulmonary health is affected by Covid-19; if there are the facilities, technology and personnel available to make this therapy and resource widely available to patients both in hospitals and the community setting in view of the high rate of respiratory disease;

Dear Deputy Cronin,

Pulmonary rehabilitation is currently part of the Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) outreach service with classes provided in both the acute hospitals across the country.

During COVID 19, pulmonary rehabilitation was paused nationally due to safety concerns for both patients and staff. Those over 70 years of age and those deemed to be medically vulnerable were advised to cocoon. Patients with chronic lung disease in this category were advised not to leave their house. Guidance for these patients was issued by the National Clinical Programme Respiratory in collaboration with patient advocacy groups and the relevant professional societies.

Over the last few months the NCP Respiratory has worked with pulmonary rehabilitation teams nationally to develop and support service changes in Pulmonary rehabilitation to enable classes to recommence as quickly as possible by developing protocols and supports for virtual telehealth to accommodate both respiratory and COVID 19 patients who require rehabilitation after overcoming the acute phase of the disease.

The NCP Respiratory issued guidance documents on “Virtual Pulmonary rehabilitation for COPD and Asthma” as well as a guidance document for “Pulmonary rehabilitation with COVID 19 patients”. This was further supported by the clinical telehealth strategy issued by the HSE as well as the availability of platforms for telehealth from the HSE to facilitate the running of classes and clinics.



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Many Pulmonary rehabilitation classes are now back up and running virtually and others are in the process of set up as staff continue to return from redeployment. Other classes have begun using social distancing with reduced patient numbers.

I trust this answers your question.

Yours Sincerely,

Sharon Hayden,
General Manager
Office of the Chief Clinical Officer