

29th June 2020

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 10478/20

Question: “To ask the Minister for Health the number of recorded deaths from Covid-19 and recorded cases of infection of retired religious personnel that were or are living in religious communities or in religious specific care or retirement homes; if steps were taken to protect the large number of elderly religious living in such settings; if steps were taken, when they were taken; the extra assistance that was given with their care;”.

Dear Deputy Ó Cuív,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which has been referred to by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response.

I wish to advise that eight COVID-19 outbreaks were reported in residential care facilities identified as facilities for retired religious personnel. These outbreaks collectively involved 113 confirmed cases of COVID-19, 23 of which were reported to be healthcare workers and 2 further cases were reported to have been contacts of a case, and were too young to be residents. None of these cases died but there were 16 deaths out of the remaining 88 cases.

This data reflects what is currently recorded on HPSC's Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting System (CIDR). It is not possible to identify the true number of cases and deaths in retired priests and nuns, as cases in residential care facilities are not clearly identified as being for retired priests or nuns so may not have been included. Likewise, retired priests and nuns living in residential care facilities which also cater to the general population will not have been included.

As part of the HSE preparedness for Covid-19, Covid Response Teams were established within each Community Healthcare Organisation to support long term residential settings.

The primary function of those teams was to assist all residential settings, including settings not obliged to register with HIQA such as some religious congregated settings, to build resilience to protect against a Covid-19 outbreak and to support the setting should an outbreak occur.

The type of support provided includes Infection Prevention and Control expert advice and training, Public Health specialist advice, provision of PPE, provision of oxygen where prescribed and provision of extra staff where required

I trust this addresses your question.

Yours sincerely,



Niamh O'Beirne
National Lead for Testing and Tracing