



14 May 2020

Our ref: GM/Communications

Deputy Bríd Smith TD
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PQ 4239/20

To ask the Minister for Health the laboratories and companies that will conduct the new HPV testing for cervical cancer screening; if more than one company is involved; the expected percentage of the overall testing to be done by each laboratory concerned; the location of the laboratories and institutions concerned; his plans to repatriate the service fully here; and the criteria and the weight given to costs in awarding the contracts to the laboratories and companies.

Dear Deputy,

Two laboratories will process all CervicalCheck tests during the initial phase of the new HPV cervical screening process. They are: Quest Diagnostics in the US and the Coombe Women and Infants University Hospital (CWIUH) in Dublin. The Quest Diagnostics laboratory is in Teterboro, Virginia, USA.

Quest Diagnostics and the CWIUH will perform HPV primary testing and reflex cytology following the introduction of the new HPV cervical screening process.

The population-based screening programme CervicalCheck has been paused on public health advice since March 30 due to the situation with Covid-19. However, the programme continued to make the technical transition to HPV cervical screening on March 30. This means that all samples taken from this date are being tested for HPV first.

While the pause has affected samples taken in the community, women within the system are continuing to be treated, as hospital resources allow. The samples being taken in colposcopy units at this time are being HPV tested first and followed up with cytology where appropriate.

When the service recommences, Quest is expected to service approximately 75 per cent of the CervicalCheck screening workload. The CWIUH has capacity to service around 25 per cent.

The long-term strategy of the HSE includes the development of the National Cervical Screening Laboratory at the CWIUH. This included an initial capital allocation of €5m to progress the development of the laboratory. There is an agreement in place with the CWIUH for this development on its site. The HSE has established a joint project with the Coombe, and a project team is in place to assist delivery of this project. A workforce plan is being finalised and recruitment has commenced. The team is undertaking visits to other laboratories to ensure the incorporation of best practice.

A capital project design has been completed, and accelerated construction plans have been developed and submitted to the planning authorities. The target timeframe for the completion of

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National Screening Service

construction is the end of 2021. The National Screening Service extended the contracts of the current providers in order to facilitate early adoption of HPV primary screening.

I trust this information is of assistance to you. Should you have further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Celine Fitzgerald, Interim CEO

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An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scaghástála
National Screening Service


BreastCheck
An Clár Náisiúnta Scaghástála Cois
The National Breast Screening Programme


CervicalCheck
AN CLÁR NÁISIÚNTA SCAGHÁSTÁLA CEIRBEACS
THE NATIONAL CERVICAL SCREENING PROGRAMME


BowelScreen
An Clár Náisiúnta Scaghástála Pobóige
The National Bowel Screening Programme


**Diabetic
RetinaScreen**
An Clár Náisiúnta Scaghástála Retiv do Diaibéite
The National Diabetic Retinal Screening Programme