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4th June 2020

Deputy John Lahart
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 5763/20 To ask the Minister for Health the number of contract tracing episodes engaged in by relevant staff and organisations by date in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ Ref 5764/20 To ask the Minister for Health the number of positive test results have been followed up with contact tracing; the number of persons requested to self-isolate as a result of this; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ Ref 7082/20 To ask the Minister for Health the statistics regarding contact tracing since the first case of Covid-19; the operation infrastructure behind the contact tracing process; and the details of referencing the chronological connection between positive test results and follow-up contact tracing in tabular form

Dear Deputy Lahart,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above three Parliamentary Questions which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. As all three questions relate to contact tracing, I propose to answer them together.

Contact tracing is a core part of the public health management of an infectious disease. In the context of the global pandemic of Covid-19 it plays an important role in trying to reduce the spread of the virus.

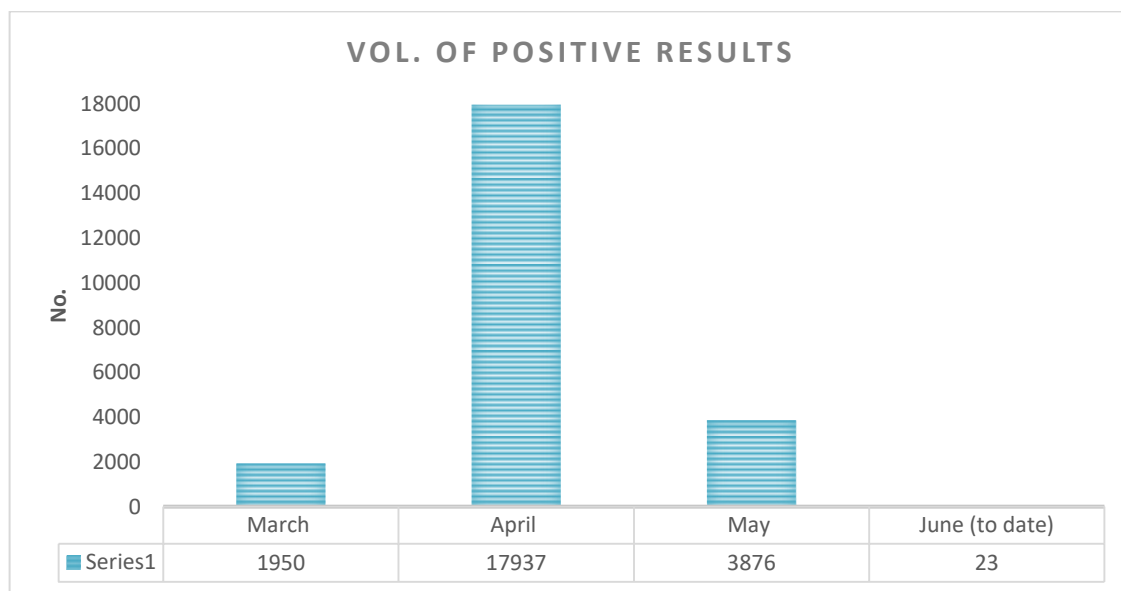
For the Covid-19 virus, contact tracing involves a three step process. Step 1, referred to as Call 1, involves calling the person who was tested, and advising them of their positive test result. It also involves checking their health status, and providing the appropriate public health advice, regarding self-isolation. Call 1 is carried out by a clinical person.

The second step, call 2, involves ringing the person with the confirmed diagnosis back, and asking them to identify and provide contact numbers for anyone they were in close contact with (less than 2 metres apart for 15 minutes) from 48 hours before the onset of their symptoms. The final step, Call 3, involves calling all the contacts identified in the Call 2, advising them that they have been in contact with a confirmed case, providing them with the appropriate public health advice and requesting that they restrict their movements.

Contact tracing takes place in Public Health Departments, Occupational Health Departments, Infection Prevention and Control Teams, and through the recently established Contact Tracing Centres. The contact tracing process is underpinned by the Covid Care Tracker system, which allows the capture of confirmed cases, and their contacts, and the subsequent management of those contacts.

The Covid Care Tracker system has a record of most of the confirmed cases, and contact tracing since its introduction in the middle of March. However it should be noted that as alluded to above, contact tracing takes place in a number of functions depending on the circumstances applicable to each positive case identified and as such not all contact tracing activity is recorded on the Covid Care tracker.

Table 1 below sets out the number of positive cases that have been confirmed on the Covid Care tracker since it commenced in mid-March.



In relation to your queries regarding data and statistics regarding contact tracing, set out below is the total number of people called per week at Call 1 and Call 3 stage as recorded by the Covid Care Tracker. These weekly data collection exercises commenced the week ending the 18th April 2020.

Data Re Week Ending 18th April 2020

- Total Call 1s made – **5,250** (average of 750 per day)
- Total Call 3s made – **7,616** (average of 1,088 per day)
- Average number of contact tracers per day – **210**

Data Re Week Ending 25th April 2020

- Total call 1s made – **2,641** (Average of 377 per day)
- Total call 3s made – **2,863** (Average of 409 per day)
- Average number of contact tracers per day – **76**

Data Re Week Ending 2nd May 2020

- Total call 1s made – **2,684** (Average of 383 per day)
- Total call 3s made – **2,336** (Average of 334 per day)
- Average number of contact tracers per day – **70**

Data Re Week Ending 9th May 2020

- Total call 1s made – **2,047** (Average of **292** per day)
- Total call 3s made – **2,503** (Average of **358** per day)
- Average number of contact tracers per day – **81**

Data Re Week Ending 16th May 2020

- Total call 1s made – **1,841** (Average of **263** per day)
- Total call 3s made – **2,869** (Average of **410** per day)
- Average number of contact tracers per day – **62**

Data Re Week Ending 22nd May 2020

- Total call 1s made – **916** (Average of **131** per day)
- Total call 3s made – **1,803** (Average of **258** per day)
- Average number of contact tracers per day – **50**

Data Re Week Ending 29th May 2020

- Total call 1s made – **722** (Average of **103** per day)
- Total call 3s made – **1,168** (Average of **167** per day)
- Average number of contact tracers per day – **42**

I trust this above provides the information and clarification sought.

Yours sincerely,



Mary-Jo Biggs
General Manager, National Women and Infants Health Programme