



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

An Oifig Ceannasáí Náisiúnta Tástála agus Rianaithe,
Foireann Bainistíocht Feidhmiúcháin, Ospidéal an Dr. Steevens, Baile Átha Cliath 8,

National Lead Testing and Tracing Office, HSE
Dr Steevens' Hospital, Steevens' Lane, Dublin 8, D08 W2A8

14th December 2020

Deputy Joe O'Brien
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 34441/20

Question: “To ask the Minister for Health if there is a mechanism to process Covid-19 tests within a matter of hours for family situations in which a relative is close to death and a swift in person visit is crucial on compassionate grounds; and if he will make a statement on the matter”.

Dear Deputy O'Brien,

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

I wish to apologise for the delay in issuing a response to your above question.

Due to the current demands of the Covid-19 pandemic and the numerous queries we have received to date it has taken longer than I would've liked to respond.

We understand that this is an exceptionally difficult time for people who are dealing with seriously ill family members as these situations are more complex since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. The HSE does not offer rapid testing in these circumstances but does provide very clear guidance with regards to visiting in critical and compassionate circumstances.

It outlines that a compassionate approach to care is relevant in all settings but has particular relevance to specialist palliative care inpatient units and subject to a risk assessment in each case will allow for visitations. I have included below the link to this guidance which outlines the detailed steps that are taken in conjunction with Public Health advice.

<https://www.hpsc.ie/az/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/visitorsvisiting/>

I trust this addresses your question.

Yours sincerely,

Niamh O'Beirne

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National Lead Testing and Tracing



Seirbhís Sláinte
Níos Fearr
á Forbairt

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