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1<sup>st</sup> December 2020

**PQ 36956/20: To ask the Minister for Health the number of vacant public health nurse posts in each CHO in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**- Jennifer Murnane O' Connor**

Dear Deputy Murnane O'Connor

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for response.

For the purposes of clarity, the definition of a vacancy is a post that is not filled either on a temporary, agency or permanent basis. Posts of staff on long term leave are not considered vacant. Each year services notify the HSE of their anticipated vacancies over the following 12 months. The method of filling PHN vacancies is the PHN Sponsorship Scheme.

The purpose of the Student PHN Sponsorship Scheme is to meet current and future service requirements for public health nursing services, targeting the areas of greatest service need. The sponsorship programme is currently the only route for recruitment into HSE Public Health Nursing. The scheme runs for one academic year starting in September and aims to develop informed skilled public health nurses. This programme involves a national joint application process between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (UCC, UCD, NUIG) and the HSE.

Vacancies that occur in the interim, pending PHN filling of the post are filled by a Community RGN.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jacqueline Nix".

**Jacqueline Nix**

*Assistant National Director, HR Community Operations*