

28th September 2020

Deputy Niamh Smyth
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 23272/20

Question: “To ask the Minister for Health the Covid-19 test centres in counties Cavan, Monaghan and Meath; his plans to open additional centres; his further plans to relocate existing centres; if so, the details of same; the days on which existing centres operate in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter”.

Dear Deputy Smyth,

The HSE have provided large scale Covid19 testing for the community at Testing Centre locations throughout the country since March in line with overall demand for testing. Covid-19. Community Testing Centres are operating at 33 locations currently around the country with the vast majority of the population having access to a Testing Centre within 1 hour of their residence.

Specifically, in the counties noted, Community Testing Centres have operated continuously in each area since March. Current locations for testing are Slane Health Centre in Co Meath, the GAA Centre in Cloghan, Co Monaghan and Ballinagh Health Centre in Co Cavan. Testing Centres operate to meet observed demand for testing and since beginning of September each of these centres have operated a 7 day a week testing centres.

The HSE continually monitor the demand for testing on both a national and regional level and in order to ensure that Covid-19 testing is available to all persons quickly. As needed, increased capacity for testing is added. This is accomplished through adding testing capacity (addition of testing bays/stations) at testing centres, extension of testing centre opening hours and, as needed, the set-up of additional testing centres on a short term basis. This includes the set-up of ‘pop-up’ testing locations operated by the National Ambulance Service and the Community Testing team staff while any preparatory work is being done to ensure readiness of a longer-term location. To date, while significant increases in capacity at these 3 locations has been accomplished through expansion of testing bays/stations, extended opening hours and addition of resources, this is subject to continual evaluation.

As part of the HSE Test and Trace Operational Model a comprehensive assessment of locations is being undertaken. The criteria, including suitability and sustainability of the location as a long term testing centre, as well as the location of this centre relative to observed travel times, was considered. This assessment concluded that for Co Meath, the testing centre will relocate in the coming weeks to a new facility at Ashbourne Health Centre while evaluation of long term options in Cavan and Monaghan remain ongoing.



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig Niamh O'Beirne, ,Ceannasaí Náisiúnta Tástála agus Rianaithe
Ospidéal an Dr. Steevens, Baile Átha Cliath 8, D08 W2A8

Office of Niamh O' Beirne, National Lead for Testing & Tracing
Dr Steevens' Hospital, Steevens' Lane, Dublin D08 W2A8

The HSE Covid-19 Community Testing Service is committed to the timely provision of safe, accessible, quality swabbing services within the community setting.

I trust this addresses your question.

Yours sincerely,

Niamh O'Beirne
National Lead for Testing and Tracing