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Oifig Ceann na n-Oibríochtaí, Cúraim Phríomhúil, Oibríochtaí Pobail  
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6<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Deputy Marian Harkin,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2

**PQ 19226/21 - To ask the Minister for Health the number of primary medical certificate applications waiting to be assessed in 2021; the number of applications that were on the waiting list from 2016 until 2020; the length of time to process these applications; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Harkin,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 19226/21) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Data in respect of those waiting for primary medical certificates is not routinely returned as part of the HSE's monthly data returns process and consequently the numbers waiting to be assessed is not available for 2019 and prior years. However the numbers waiting has been collated from the CHO areas at March 2021 and December 2020. The latest available data is at March 2021 at which point a total of 1,809 people were waiting to be assessed for a primary medical certificate. At the end of December 2020 a total of 1,689 people were waiting to be assessed for a primary medical certificate.

There are challenges in some CHO areas in progressing assessments for primary medical certificates due to redeployment of Medical Officers particularly in regard to the COVID Vaccine Programme and management of outbreaks in Residential Care Facilities across the country. The HSE is currently revising its service recovery and restoration plans taking account of the COVID pressure challenges presenting. Assessments for primary medical certificates are considered in that context and every option is being considered to address the backlog for assessments for primary medical certificates. Due to the challenges in progressing assessments as outlined here it is not possible to provide a timeframe in which the numbers waiting to be assessed will be processed.

I trust this is of assistance to you.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Maeve Raeside'.

**Maeve Raeside**

General Manager Primary Care,  
National Community Operations