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Health Service Executive

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6th May 2021

Ms. Neasa Hourigan TD
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Re: PQ ref 19945/21

“To ask the Minister for Health the progress on developing clinical ICT systems to provide the required infrastructure to support effective clinical decision making; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

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

I have reviewed that matter and the following composite reply is the current position.

I can confirm that the HSE is increasingly making use of Clinical ICT Systems including innovations and information technology (IT) to improve the patient's clinical journey and enhance the process of decision making by doctors and other healthcare practitioners. Effective data collection, management and analysis to support day to day care delivery, wider policy and management decision making is of crucial importance. The speed of decision-making and the implementation of key data solutions seen during the Covid response has been unprecedented in healthcare, but it is of even more importance now to deal with returning to a steady state and preparing for further escalations and activities. Examples of such ICT Systems are; the Health Performance Visualisation Platform (Phase 1); the Individual Health Identifier (IHI); the Maternal & New-born Clinical Management System (MN-CMS); the National Cancer Information System (NCIS) and the Clinical Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Information System.

During recent months, the HSE has had to adapt and change service delivery due to COVID-19 related activities. The Health Performance Visualisation Platform (Phase 1) is now in progress across 28 acute Model 3 and 4 hospitals and allows clinical staff to view real time evidence of admissions, discharges, emergency department activity, elective activity, bed management activity and diagnostics and

imaging within each hospital. The roll out of this platform allows for data sharing across systems, providing analytics and modelling which supports the HSE and greater public health team in clinical decision making. As part of managing demand and continuing productivity improvement, it is imperative to have a clear, evidenced based view in near real-time on the current capacity and utilisation, with data to support decision making to make best use of existing capacity and deliver best outcomes.

The implementation of an Individual Health Identifier (IHI) has been a key part of the Government's eHealth strategy and one of the most important ICT projects ever undertaken by the HSE. In terms of the Covid 19 response, the IHI number has been used to safely identify patients as they are guided through the Covid Test, Scheduling, Assessment and Vaccination Process. In particular, the provision of the Health Identifiers, in conjunction with Eircodes enabled HSE Community Operations to plan for and identify the demand and support the roll out of Covid-testing for patients and long stay residential facilities such as Nursing Homes and for serial testing of congregated settings and outbreak sites using test centres in proximity to the patient's home or location. As part of managing demand and the continued rollout of the Covid vaccination programme, the IHI ensures that clinical staff have immediate access to accurate demographic information, to determine levels of eligibility, with data to support clinical decision making to make best use of existing capacity and deliver optimal outcomes. With the IHI having already been used for the schools immunisation programme it is now linked to vaccination records for any individual who receives a vaccine in Ireland. The HSE recently completed a hugely successful IHI match rate improvement project and with the inclusion of the PPSN as provided for with Covid Vaccinations and the inclusion of data quality APIs to assist with finding Eircodes for addresses, have taken match rates of between 33% to 58% to returning match rates in the 95-98% range.

The Maternal & New-born Clinical Management System (MN-CMS) Programme provides a single Electronic Health Record for all women and babies in maternity, neonatology and gynaecology services in Ireland as part of the National Electronic Health Record (EHR) Programme. In the context of COVID-19, Midwifery & Nursing Managers can make informed decisions in relation to identification of patients for appropriate bed management and the allocation of resources and therefore patients may be assured that the most appropriate care is given to them with up to date information from real-time reports, with their safety in mind, so that their care is delivered in the most appropriate location. This system is currently live in Cork University Maternity Hospital, University Hospital Kerry, Rotunda Hospital, and National Maternity Hospital Holles Street.

The National Cancer Information System is a shared record for the organised cancer care model with the primary goal of a single record supporting patientcare within and across hub and spoke hospital services. It allows for collaborative clinical judgement in diagnosis, staging and determination of treatment within the specific cancer multi-disciplinary team meetings; and electronic prescribing of chemotherapy within and between hospitals as needed. NCIS tracks the patient from their registration via the Hospital Information System, through the various tests, scans and xrays associated with their cancer diagnosis. It is a key enabler for timely Medical Decision Making (MDM) in the diagnosis and treatment of patients. This system is currently live in Galway University Hospital, Mayo University Hospital, and St Luke Rathgar.

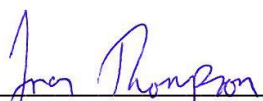
Clinical ICU Information Systems enable the electronic collection of data to create a full record of all patient episodes and care throughout their stay in ICU. This ensures that high quality clinical information is recorded in a consistent manner through pre-defined electronic datasets. The ICU clinical information system is a rich data source and assists in clinical decision making, clinical audit, research and benchmarking. This system is currently live in 28 Acute Hospitals. There is a plan in place to go to procurement for the remaining hospital sites nationwide.

As stated in the 2021 HSE National Service Plan, substantial work has been done in developing the design for an Integrated Information Service (IIS) to enable the HSE to become a data-driven, evidence-based organisation. The IIS was designed to more effectively manage quality of information, consolidate information to provide a comprehensive understanding of the entirety of the health system, and enhance insights to drive better decision making and sustainably improve the quality of care.

Necessary data flows and analytics capacity are required to underpin the delivery of a wide range of technology initiatives as part of our response to COVID-19 and return to steady state including; Health Performance Visualisation Platform; Summary Care Record; Health Pathways Solution; National Waiting List Management System and ePharmacy/ePrescribing Programme. The consolidation and investment in data and information capabilities, ensures that evidence is at the core of routine decision making and improvement planning and in the recovery transformation. The successful delivery of these solutions will improve clinical decision making across our hospital network to safely manage services in real time.

I trust that this clarifies. Should you have further queries please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Yours sincerely,



Fran Thompson,
Interim Chief Information Officer, OoCIO, HSE.