



21st December 2021

Deputy Violet-Anne Wynne,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 61620/21 - To ask the Minister for Health the number of outstanding applications for primary medical certificates at each year end from 2017 to 2020 and to date in 2021, by CHO in tabular form.

- Violet-Anne Wynne

Dear Deputy Wynne,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 61620/21) 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 September 2021 and December 2020. The latest available data is at September 2021, at which point a total of 585 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. The breakdown of the numbers waiting to be assessed by CHO area at September 2021 and December 2020 is shown in the attached Appendix 1.

Building upon the experience from earlier waves of the pandemic, Community Services developed a prioritisation framework to support local decisions made on service prioritisation. This approach ensures that services are focused on identifying and supporting patients who have the greatest need and enabling staff to be deployed where necessary to support these patients. Where services are curtailed or reduced, this is in line with clinical approval, a shared national position and with an appropriate risk assessment and communication with providers, service users and families.

There has been significant progress in addressing the backlog for assessments for primary medical certificates. The latest available data is at September 2021 and in the period from January to September 2021 there were 2,350 assessments carried out compared to 1,273 in the full year 2020. 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.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seán McArt'.

Seán McArt

General Manager Primary Care
National Community Operations