



Géaroibríochtaí

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**Date: 21/09/2021**

Deputy Mattie McGrath TD  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ No. 42027/21**

**To ask the Minister for Health if it is current HSE hospital policy to carry out PCR tests on the deceased; the names of all hospitals that have carried out PCR tests on the deceased; the numbers of tests carried out on the deceased; the reason a PCR test would be carried out on a deceased citizen; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**Deputy Mattie McGrath**

Dear Deputy McGrath,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Response:

The Faculty of Pathology have produced guidelines (see <https://rcpi-live-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Faculty-of-Pathology-Autopsy-Guidelines-during-Covid-19-Pandemic.pdf>) to guide the requirement for post-mortem and COVID testing of remains. These guidelines identify the need to discuss each case with the local Coroner(s) to deliver a multidisciplinary team approach to the Covid-19 risk evaluation and plan for testing (as required). For cases where the COVID status is unknown and an open cavity post-mortem is required, there is a requirement to determine the COVID status of the deceased. All hospitals assess the requirement for a post-mortem COVID test in line with these guidelines.

Please be aware that the HSE has also produced comprehensive Care of the Deceased Guidelines in partnership with the HPSC to ensure the dignified treatment of the deceased and families in a range of situations. This guidance is available at:

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/funeraldirectorguidance/Guidance%20for%20care%20of%20the%20deceased%20person.pdf>

The following principles underpin the guidance:

- Treat the deceased person with dignity and respect.
- Treat bereaved relatives and friends with kindness and compassion.
- Minimise infection risks and protect staff and others, such as faith leaders and religious personnel, who care for deceased people.

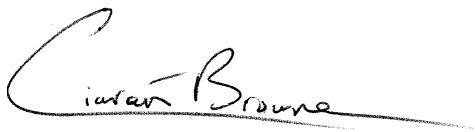
No information is available centrally on the number of PCR tests undertaken on deceased person across HSE hospitals.

The HSE has in place a specific programme of work to ensure that end of life and care of the deceased services are improved. Working in close partnership with the Irish Hospice Foundation, the HSE has established a National Bereavement Support Line and undertaken a range of actions over the pandemic period to help and support families bereaved during this period.

If you require additional information on this work, please don't hesitate to contact me for further details.

Please be aware that

Response to  
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ciaran Browne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'C'.

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Dr. Ciaran Browne

Acute Hospitals Operations