



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Príomhúil

Seomra 243, Ospidéal Dr Steevens,
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20th April 2022

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

PQ 20316/22 – To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons diagnosed with long-Covid on a three-monthly basis for 2021 and to date in 2022; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Marian Harkin

Dear Deputy Harkin,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions (PQ 20316/22), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

It is recognised that a proportion of patients will experience persistent and prolonged symptoms after acute COVID-19 infection. There are many terms used to describe this post-acute sequelae, the most commonly used terms are Post COVID-19 Condition or Long COVID. Information on the features, incidence and course of Post COVID-19 Condition/Long COVID is still emerging. Generally, signs and symptoms develop during or following an infection consistent with COVID-19, continue for more than 4-12 weeks and are not explained by an alternative diagnosis. The condition usually presents with clusters of symptoms, often overlapping, which may change over time and can affect any system in the body.

The HSE has developed an interim Model of Care for Long COVID. This sets out how services and supports should be designed and delivered for patients who have ongoing symptoms in the Post-Acute phase of their illness and those who are experiencing Long COVID. This Model of Care aims to build on existing service provision, in addition to establishing new services across a number of health care settings, including GP, community services and acute hospitals. There will be a phased implementation of this model of care with a focus on establishing, Post-Acute and Long COVID clinics as initial priority. This will involve expanding the resources at existing clinics where required and development of new clinics in line with the Model of Care.

The exact number of people that are affected with Long COVID remains unknown, but published reports indicated that approximately 10-20% of COVID-19 patients experience lingering symptoms for weeks to months following Covid-19 infection. The HSE does not currently hold information centrally on the numbers of patients affected by Long COVID. As part of this programme of work however, the HSE is examining how it can model the possible numbers affected by Long COVID, noting that this will take time as more evidence emerges. An epidemiological survey is being planned in this regard and will be key to providing insight and understanding to the exact number of patients affected by Long COVID. This will help to forecast future demand for services and will inform the direction of the Model of Care.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.



Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TJ Dunford', is written over a horizontal line.

TJ Dunford
Head of Operations - Primary Care
Community Operations