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Deputy Peadar Tóibín
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2
15 June 2022

Re: Parliamentary Question (PQ) 29231/22

Dear Deputy Tóibín,

I refer to the following parliamentary question which you recently submitted to the Health Service Executive;

PQ 29231/22 – *To ask the Minister for Health the number of cancelled hospital appointments in the State broken down by individual hospital in each of the past five years and to date in 2022, in tabular form.*

This response to the above parliamentary question will define a hospital initiated scheduled care appointment cancellation, the likely reasons for a cancellation and rescheduling of patient appointments.

The Health Service Executive's Business Intelligence Unit commenced the collection of data in relation to hospital initiated cancellations of scheduled care appointments from April 2022 onwards. Data is not available prior to this date.

Appendix I identifies the number of hospital initiated appointment cancellations in the months of April and May 2022.

I. Definition of a hospital initiated inpatient/day case or outpatient cancellation

A hospital initiated cancellation of a scheduled care appointment is defined as the rescheduling of a patient To Come In (TCI) date by the hospital due to circumstances beyond its control.

II. Reasons for cancellation of scheduled care appointments

Hospitals may have to cancel scheduled care appointments due to factors outside their control including the following;

- I. Increased ED attendances and admissions resulting in a requirement for surge inpatient bed capacity
- II. Unforeseen circumstances, e.g. weather events, infection outbreaks or industrial action.

III. Rescheduling of hospital initiated inpatient/day case appointments

Hospitals endeavor to provide the patient with as much notice as possible in relation to the cancellation of elective inpatient/day case appointments. The National Inpatient, Day Case, Planned Procedure (IDPP) waiting list management protocol 2017 issued by the National Treatment Purchase Fund requires hospitals to reschedule elective care appointments within six weeks of cancellation, subject to patient confirmation regarding their availability to attend. Clinical guidance must be sought when managing and rescheduling patients appointments cancelled by the hospital. This is necessary to ensure that urgent and vulnerable patients are rescheduled appropriately. Patients cancelled by the hospital will not have their waiting list date reset.



IV. Rescheduling of hospital initiated outpatient appointment cancellations

In accordance with the 'Management of Outpatient Services 2.1, OSPIP 2014' following a hospital cancellation;

- I. Urgent patients must be rescheduled and seen within one week
- II. Semi-urgent and non-urgent patients, issued with the next available appointment slot based on their clinical prioritisation category and clinically recommended timeframe.
- III. In accordance with best practice, semi-urgent and non-urgent patients, where possible, should be rescheduled and seen within three weeks.
- IV. If there is no available capacity within these timeframes, the clinician must be informed, and allocate the next available appointment unless otherwise instructed.
- V. Hospital cancellations do not incur a wait time clock reset.

V. Hospital initiated cancellations in April and May 2022

The Health Service Executive's Business Intelligence Unit is working with Hospitals and Hospital Groups to develop a robust process for the collection of data on hospital initiated cancellation of patient appointments.

Appendix I (attached pdf document) shows the details of hospital initiated cancellation of patient appointments in the months of April and May 2022. Work is ongoing to validate the data and in this context the data may be subject to change.

I trust the above response answers the parliamentary question to your satisfaction.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carmel Beirne'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Carmel Beirne
General Manager
Acute Operations**