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Deputy David Cullinane
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2
15 June 2022

RE: Parliamentary Questions (PQs) - 31695/22 and 30463/22

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

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

PQ 31695/22 - To ask the Minister for Health the number of diagnostic test cancellations in January, February, March, April and May 2022, broken down by month and by hospital in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 30463/22 - To ask the Minister for Health the number of children who were removed from and added to the in-patient hospital waiting lists in 2021 to date by month and by hospital and further broken down by whether the removal from the waiting list was as a result of a patient seen for treatment or as a result of validating the waiting lists in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

This response will address both of the above PQs.

In response to PQ 31695/22 the definition of a hospital initiated scheduled care appointment cancellation, the potential reasons for cancellation and rescheduling of such appointments is set out below.

The Health Service Executive does not collect data in relation to diagnostic test cancellations.

I. Definition of a hospital initiated scheduled care appointment 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.

In response to PQ 30463/22 - data is not collected centrally in relation to the number of children who were removed from and added to the inpatient hospital waiting list in 2021.

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

Yours sincerely,

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

Carmel Beirne
General Manager
Acute Operations