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PQ 33159/22: To ask the Minister for Health the number of full-time equivalent medical oncology nurses currently in-post in the public system per 100,000 in the population of Ireland; the number of medical oncology nurses in-post who are required in order to meet the current and projected demands of nursing in oncology to 2030; and if he will make a statement on the matter

PQ 33160/22: To ask the Minister for Health the training, recruitment and retention plans that are in place to ensure that a sufficient number of medical oncology nurses are in-post to meet current and projected demand; and if he will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

Full-time equivalent numbers of medical oncology Nurses currently in-post is not available within NCCP as all medical oncology nursing posts sit within the Acute Hospital division and National HR Divisions. All cancer centres and Acute Hospitals report direct to National HR with regard to existing and new posts and current vacancies. NCCP is not provided with this information as they are counted in the HG WTE Census.

Parallel to this, a separate needs assessment and horizon scanning for the future medical oncology workforce is ongoing and will inform future requirements. The learning from COVID 19 and the Cyberattack will be integral to the plan. However the NCCP nursing team and the Business & Planning team collaborate with each of the cancer centres and all of the Systemic anticancer treatment (SACT) units (26 in number) nationally with regard to tracking of new posts annually.

The NCCP SACT and Nursing teams link with the HEI's and cancer centres to implement the National Cancer Strategy (NCS) Recommendation 50 (Cancer service workforce plan). This work is also underpinned by the SACT Model of Care 2022 which states that adequate staffing should be in place to support a safe and quality SACT service.

NCCP currently follows the HSE guidance for recruitment and retention of all staff. This is applied at a local level to all clinical staff. There are discussions within NCCP working groups about incorporating recommendations for the recruitment and retention of staff into the national cancer services workforce plan.

Nursing posts are allocated through the NCCP NSP process annually. Collaboration with services determines service need and service readiness these factors assist in the decision making and prioritisation of posts allocated resilience and succession planning are key considerations.

The Expert Review Body (ERB) on Nursing and Midwifery was set up by the Minister for Health in 2021. A report was published in January 2022. It details projections of the requirements to provide future care, as well as outlining career pathways currently available through clinical and management grades. It makes recommendations related to safe nurse and midwifery staffing, decision-making in recruitment and retention and the wellbeing of nurses and midwives.

Yours sincerely



Professor Risteárd Ó Laoide
National Director
National Cancer Control Programme

