



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Cúnta Náisiúnta
Clár Cúraim Pobail Feabhsaithe &
Conarthaí Príomhchúraim
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Urlár 2, Páirc Ghnó Bhóthar na Modhfheirme,
Bóthar na Modhfheirme, Corcaigh, T12 HT02

Office of the Assistant National Director
Enhanced Community Care Programme &
Primary Care Contracts
Health Service Executive
Floor 2, Model Business Park,
Model Farm Road, Cork, T12 HT02

www.hse.ie
T: 021-4928512
E: primarycare.strategy@hse.ie


26th July 2022

Deputy Neasa Hourigan,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2.

PQ 33778/22 To ask the Minister for Health the number of general practitioners operating in Ireland on a monthly basis; and the proportion of these operating general practitioners who were using the Healthlink eReferral system on a monthly basis in each of the years 2015 to 2021 and date in 2022, in tabular form. -Neasa Hourigan.

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

I refer to your recent parliamentary question which was passed to the HSE for response. Please see the tables below which outline the number of general practitioners operating in Ireland on a monthly basis for 2021 and 2022.

 Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte Health Service Executive						
PCRS Monthly Contractor Report						
Number of Agreements with GPs 2022						
	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
Number of GPs	2,536	2,534	2,539	2,538	2,546	2,548
GPs not contracted to the GMS Scheme who are registered to provide services under the Primary Childhood Immunisation Scheme, the Health (Amendment) Act 1996, Heartwatch, Methadone Treatment Scheme and National Cancer Screening Service	538	538	538	538	538	538



PCRS Monthly Contractor Report

Number of Agreements with GPs 2021

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of GPs	2,505	2,496	2,500	2,520	2,529	2,530	2,525	2,532	2,536	2,536	2,549	2,555
GPs not contracted to the GMS Scheme who are registered to provide services under the Primary Childhood Immunisation Scheme, the Health (Amendment) Act 1996, Heartwatch, Methadone Treatment Scheme and National Cancer Screening Service	528	528	528	528	528	528	528	528	528	528	528	528

Healthlink is a HSE solution that enables the electronic transmission of structured clinical messages between primary care and secondary care. The type of primary care messages include the following:-

- i) GP Vaccination Reports
- ii) Laboratory Ordering
- iii) Referrals
- iv) Radiology Ordering
- v) GP Data Returns
- vi) New Born Clinical Management shared-Care
- vii) Chronic Disease Management
- viii) Electronic Sick Certs



The Secondary Care system utilises Healthlink to sent the following reports where available:-

- i) Covid Results
- ii) Laboratory Reports
- iii) Radiology Reports
- iv) Discharge Summaries
- v) A&E Death and Discharge Notifications
- vi) OPD Waiting List and Appointment Schedules
- vii) GP-OP out of hours

In total in 2021, 37m structured electronic messages were sent between primary and secondary care through the Healthlink solution.

General Practice systems ingest the structured message into their system thus creating an integrated electronic record.

The Healthlink system has been operational for many years prior to 2015 therefore it already had a growing number of GPs connected to it. As electronic services expanded at various hospital sites around the country as well as with Co-Ops, DEASP and others, GPs could see the benefits to them and came on board. GPs connect to Healthlink services mainly via their Practice Management Systems of which there are 4, active in Ireland. Up to 2015, the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) had introduced the Breast, Prostate and Lung cancer referrals to the 8 cancer centres around the country. There was only a small number of General referrals available to choose from hence the numbers appear low up to 2016. In 2016, a mandate was given to all hospitals by the HSE to accept electronic General Referrals by March of that year. From then on, it can be seen that the numbers have continued to grow in terms of GP usage. Throughout the Pandemic, electronic referrals played a significant role in getting patients referred for Covid testing, Covid vaccination, Covid community assessment hubs and Covid close contacts.

eReferral system on a monthly basis in each of the years 2015 to 2021

Year	Month	Active Healthlink GPs	Unique GPs Submitting Referrals with a month	% GPs Sending eReferrals
2015	1	3,109	966	31.07
2015	2	3,131	913	29.16
2015	3	3,142	919	29.25
2015	4	3,164	939	29.68
2015	5	3,203	962	30.03
2015	6	3,184	989	31.06
2015	7	3,251	974	29.96



Year	Month	Active Healthlink GPs	Unique GPs Submitting Referrals with a month	% GPs Sending eReferrals
2015	8	3,265	923	28.27
2015	9	3,327	1,031	30.99
2015	10	3,321	1,092	32.88
2015	11	3,333	1,153	34.59
2015	12	3,335	1,114	33.40
2016	1	3,388	1,230	36.30
2016	2	3,429	1,291	37.65
2016	3	3,481	1,360	39.07
2016	4	3,534	1,432	40.52
2016	5	3,532	1,492	42.24
2016	6	3,549	1,467	41.34
2016	7	3,631	1,467	40.40
2016	8	3,639	1,518	41.71
2016	9	3,652	1,593	43.62
2016	10	3,628	1,570	43.27
2016	11	3,678	1,651	44.89
2016	12	3,631	1,540	42.41
2017	1	3,678	1,660	45.13
2017	2	3,691	1,719	46.57
2017	3	3,734	1,753	46.95
2017	4	3,706	1,708	46.09
2017	5	3,757	1,807	48.10
2017	6	3,718	1,729	46.50
2017	7	3,777	1,776	47.02
2017	8	3,820	1,799	47.09
2017	9	3,855	1,828	47.42
2017	10	3,859	1,875	48.59



Year	Month	Active Healthlink GPs	Unique GPs Submitting Referrals with a month	% GPs Sending eReferrals
2017	11	3,890	1,929	49.59
2017	12	3,822	1,848	48.35
2018	1	3,883	1,974	50.84
2018	2	3,862	2,016	52.20
2018	3	3,870	2,049	52.95
2018	4	3,868	2,106	54.45
2018	5	3,879	2,238	57.70
2018	6	3,861	2,281	59.08
2018	7	3,975	2,404	60.48
2018	8	3,998	2,422	60.58
2018	9	4,006	2,442	60.96
2018	10	4,029	2,535	62.92
2018	11	4,022	2,566	63.80
2018	12	3,988	2,440	61.18
2019	1	4,043	2,594	64.16
2019	2	4,043	2,628	65.00
2019	3	4,078	2,629	64.47
2019	4	4,086	2,658	65.05
2019	5	4,095	2,704	66.03
2019	6	4,066	2,641	64.95
2019	7	4,204	2,782	66.18
2019	8	4,169	2,778	66.63
2019	9	4,190	2,797	66.75
2019	10	4,233	2,890	68.27
2019	11	4,235	2,940	69.42
2019	12	4,208	2,835	67.37
2020	1	4,254	2,973	69.89



Year	Month	Active Healthlink GPs	Unique GPs Submitting Referrals with a month	% GPs Sending eReferrals
2020	2	4,249	2,971	69.92
2020	3	4,355	3,676	84.41
2020	4	4,271	3,575	83.70
2020	5	4,296	3,675	85.54
2020	6	4,367	3,683	84.34
2020	7	4,592	3,861	84.08
2020	8	4,621	3,933	85.11
2020	9	4,723	4,012	84.95
2020	10	4,801	4,051	84.38
2020	11	4,762	4,016	84.33
2020	12	4,734	4,026	85.04
2021	1	4,749	4,016	84.57
2021	2	4,725	3,991	84.47
2021	3	4,754	4,032	84.81
2021	4	4,770	4,043	84.76
2021	5	4,611	3,898	84.54
2021	6	4,679	3,699	79.06
2021	7	4,878	3,984	81.67
2021	8	4,905	3,958	80.69
2021	9	4,953	4,030	81.36
2021	10	4,890	4,048	82.78
2021	11	4,932	4,076	82.64
2021	12	4,943	4,085	82.64
2022	1	4,989	4,116	82.50
2022	2	4,900	4,048	82.61
2022	3	4,974	4,044	81.30
2022	4	4,905	3,994	81.43



Year	Month	Active Healthlink GPs	Unique GPs Submitting Referrals with a month	% GPs Sending eReferrals
2022	5	4,933	4,002	81.13
2022	6	4,897	3,947	80.60

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Crowley', with a horizontal line underneath.

**Geraldine Crowley,
Assistant National Director,
Enhanced Community Care Programme &
Primary Care Contracts**