



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

10<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Deputy David Cullinane,  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2.

Rannan na nOspideil Ghearmhíochaine  
Aonad 4A – Áras Dargan  
An Ceantar Theas  
An Bothar Mileata  
Cill Mhaighneann  
BÁC 8

Acute Operations  
Health Service Executive  
Unit 4A - The Dargan Building  
Heuston South Quarter  
Military Road  
Kilmainham  
Dublin 8.

**12829/22 To ask the Minister for Health the total number of outpatient appointments cancelled in acute hospitals in each of the years 2010 to 2021 and to date in 2022, by hospital group and hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**12830/22 To ask the Minister for Health the total number of elective and non-elective procedures cancelled in acute hospitals in each of the years 2010 to 2021 and to date in 2022 due to hospital overcrowding by hospital group and hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

## **Response**

In response to your queries above relating to outpatient cancellations and elective procedure cancellations for 2010 to 2021 and to date in 2022, by hospital group and hospital please see below.

In terms non elective procedures, these procedures are not planned as such, they are delivered based on immediate capacity and clinical prioritisation within the Hospital at the time the patient presents as such there would be no cancellation data for patients in this category.

There are a number of factors that can influence Hospital cancellation and rescheduling of outpatients and elective planned procedures in Acute Services. Some of these are linked to constraints in relation to capacity within the organisation for a variety of reasons including reduced access to surgical beds associated with ED Surge, Delayed Discharges and indeed COVID. Currently in 2022 pressures relate to access to beds due to delayed discharges, COVID beds and sick leave of staff. There are also events that can lead to cancellations such as industrial action,

storms and of course COVID and the Cyber Attack have lead cancellations in this context.

In all cases both for outpatients and elective procedures where cancellations take place Hospitals will assess capacity and prioritise patients who require urgent or time dependent access.

It should be further noted that patients can also decide to cancel their outpatient appointment or planned procedure this has seen some increase due to levels of COVID in the community. Also to note that outpatient appointments and planned procedures can be cancelled for clinical reasons.

In the context of scheduled care activity, with specific reference to your request in the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) are not in a position to provide the requested cancellation data, as within their remit they do not collect and collate cancellation activity, namely; numbers treated /cancellations, etc. There are challenges arising with the data collected by the NTPF, not all hospitals return cancellation information thus impacting a true reflection of overall numbers. In addition, there are a number of caveats related to data validity and furnishing this data would not provide an accurate reflection of the cancellation status nationally.

In terms of Hospital cancellations for outpatient appointments and elective planned procedures the HSE are currently working with the Business Intelligence Unit (BIU), Hospital Groups and Hospitals to develop a robust process for the collection and collation of cancellations for planned activities across Scheduled Care that are postponed by Hospitals due to constraints as outlined above. This process is currently in the development phase and it is hoped that in quarter 2, 2022 preliminary data will be available. This information will not be retrospective but will inform from an operational and planning perspective moving forward.

I trust that this response is satisfactory

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trish King', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

**Trish King**  
**General Manager**  
**Acute Operations**