

24 May 2022

Deputy Peadar Tóibín
Peadar.Toibin@oireachtas.ie

Our Ref: HM/Communications

PQ23298/22: To ask the Minister for Health the status of the construction of the new cervical screening laboratory; the initial expected date for completion of construction; if any delays have been encountered in the project; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question.

A strategic decision was made (arising from recommendations of the Dr Scally Report) in 2018 to develop a National Cervical Screening Laboratory (NCSL) in Ireland in conjunction with the Coombe Women and Infants University Hospital (CWIUH) in Dublin. The new bespoke laboratory will comprise of 1,340sq m of accommodation over four floors providing cytology, HPV testing, training, audit, and research facilities. Construction of the new laboratory is due to be completed in the second quarter of 2022. The laboratory is due to be operational in quarter three of 2022.

The opening of the new NCSL at the CWIUH (Coombe Women and Infant University Hospital) will build capacity and resilience into the public element of the laboratory services required for the national cervical screening programme in Ireland. The NCSL will enable NSS to reduce its dependency on third party providers to meet the needs of CervicalCheck. The new laboratory is designed to become the principal provider of cervical screening laboratory services for the NSS.

University courses

A key factor for the immediate and long-term success of the NCSL is the availability and recruitment of cytopathology staff, namely consultant cytopathologists, in the face of increased market demand and the continued decline of the cytology industry in Ireland and globally.

Work is ongoing with stakeholders across the health service to ensure workforce resiliency in the medium to long term. This includes engagement with the RCPI (Royal College of Physicians of Ireland) Faculty of Pathology to introduce a post-CSCST (Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of Specialist Training) fellowship, and include cervical cytology in the histopathology training curriculum.

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An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála
National Screening Service

For other queries, programme participants can call the Freephone information line on 1800 45 45 55; email: info@screeningservice.ie; or contact their clinic directly.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Fiona Murphy,
Chief Executive.

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