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25th May, 2022

Deputy Louise O'Reilly, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 23533/22

To ask the Minister for Health the number of heart failure units that do not have access to BNP testing and other appropriate diagnostic testing; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy O' Reilly,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in relation to the above parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have consulted with the National Heart Programme (NHP) on your question and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

Diagnosing heart failure is based on a combination of history, physical examination, functional assessment, NPs and echocardiogram. Natriuretic peptide testing (NT pro BNP or BNP) is a standard test required in the diagnosis and management of heart failure.

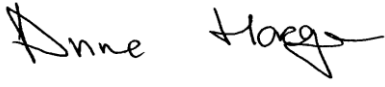
A review of heart failure services carried out by the Heart Failure Sub-group of the National Heart Programme Clinical Advisory Group (NHP CAG) in 2021 found 28 of 31 heart failure services have access to BNP testing.

There has been significant progress in the availability of this test with an agreement to increase direct access to chronic disease diagnostic services for GPs, including equitable access to NT pro BNP testing. GPs will soon be provided with direct access to NT pro BNP blood testing nationally via public hospitals for the full adult population, regardless of their GMS status. Direct GP access to this blood test will enhance the diagnosis and management of individuals with heart failure, atrial fibrillation, type 2 diabetes and ischemic heart disease in primary care.

This service will be supported by 23 public hospital laboratories across Ireland. Roll out of this service has commenced, with the service in place in 6 hospitals and an additional 4 hospital laboratories working towards providing the service by end of June 2022.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Anne Horgan
General Manager