

Jennifer Murnane O'Connor TD
Fianna Fáil
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

e. Jennifer.murnaneconnor@oireachtas.ie

1st June 2022

PQ 25168/22: To ask the Minister for Health the estimated full-year cost to reduce the two-year waiting list for cancer genetic screening

Dear Deputy Murnane O'Connor,

Testing for inherited cancer-causing genes is most commonly carried out following assessment and discussion with a genetic counsellor, either at the Cancer Genetics Service at St James's Hospital or the Department of Clinical Genetics, at CHI at Crumlin. All referrals received are clinically triaged by a consultant geneticist and appointments allocated accordingly. Both services have made concerted efforts (e.g. through virtual appointments and waiting list initiatives) to reduce waiting times, from a peak of approximately 24 months, to 12-18 months for a routine appointment. A separate pathway in place, with specified turnaround times, for those patients with cancer in whom such a gene test is carried out to determine choice of drug treatment.

Continued investment in cancer genetics is required to further reduce waiting times and to build a comprehensive genetics and genomics service, given its growing role in patient care. This is acknowledged in the work currently underway on the development of a National Genetics and Genomics Strategy, which will make recommendations in relation to the required investment in areas such as new clinical pathways, infrastructural needs, workforce and training.

Yours sincerely



Professor Risteárd Ó Laoide
National Director
National Cancer Control Programme