

Michael Lowry TD
Independent
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

e. michael.lowry@oireachtas.ie

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PQ 51105/22: To ask the Minister for Health the number of patients waiting on radiation therapy since January 2022 until the end of September 2022, by county and radiotherapy centre in tabular form; if he is satisfied that there is enough radiation therapists working in the HSE to carry out radiation therapy treatment to those on waiting lists; the measures that are being taken to alleviate the obstacles in having radiation therapy provided to patients in the earliest timeframe; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Lowry,

NCCP are currently reviewing the 2017-2022 National Radiation Oncology Workforce Plan, which highlighted the deficits in the clinical workforce. Significant workforce investment has been made in the last 5 years and NCCP are working with the clinical service to update the numbers in line with international best practice. This will be completed by year end.

Parallel to this a separate needs assessment and horizon scanning for the future Radiation Oncology workforce is taking place and will inform the next plan. The learning from COVID 19 and the Cyberattack will be integral to the plan. This should also be completed by year-end.

NCCP currently follows the HSE guidance for recruitment and retention of all staff. This is applied at a local level to include Radiation Oncology clinical staff. There are no current localised plans relating to Radiation Oncology. There are discussions within the working group about incorporating recommendations for the recruitment and retention of staff into the new National Radiation Oncology Workforce plan 2022-2027.

The National Cancer Control Programme collects limited summary data on the number of new patients completing radical radiotherapy. However, data on the organisation, delivery and delay of individual patient treatment is data that only each individual hospital can comment on. The National Cancer Control Programme do not have access to such data.

Yours sincerely



Professor Risteárd Ó Laoide
National Director
National Cancer Control Programme

