



22 September 2022

Deputy Pa Daly
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Our Ref: HM/GM/Communications

PQ41991/22: To ask the Minister for Health if he will approve additional mobile units for BreastCheck in County Kerry given the peripherality of the county and the difficulties for many to travel long distances for their appointment.

PQ41992/22: To ask the Minister for Health the uptake of BreastCheck appointments by county in 2019, to 2021 and to date in 2022, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the two Parliamentary Questions above, which I intend to answer as one. I trust you are agreeable with this approach

PQ41991/22: To ask the Minister for Health if he will approve additional mobile units for BreastCheck in County Kerry given the peripherality of the county and the difficulties for many to travel long distances for their appointment.

BreastCheck, the HSE National Breast Screening Programme, offers population-based breast screening to eligible women on an area-by-area basis every two years.

There are four regional centres delivering BreastCheck services throughout the country: Eccles Street and Merrion Road in Dublin; Newcastle Road in Galway; and Infirmary Road in Cork.

However, not all eligible women wish, or are able, to travel to one of these regional units. An important principle for the BreastCheck programme is to offer screening services locally to women in counties and locations convenient to where they live. To achieve this, each of the four screening units operates in tandem with mobile units. The majority of women participating in BreastCheck have their mammogram in one of these units.

We have recently funded three new BreastCheck mobile units, which will increase our national screening capacity. All three mobiles are now in service. However, ongoing COVID-19 challenges and radiology staff shortages continue to affect our capacity.

BreastCheck screens on an area-by-area basis every two years. We call this process a screening 'round'. Every screening round we offer screening in Co. Kerry in Tralee and then in Killarney. The BreastCheck mobile stays in one location until it has invited all eligible women in that area. It then moves to the other location and repeats this process.

Our latest round of screening in Tralee ended in December 2021. We began screening in Killarney in January 2022. We plan to return to Tralee before the end of this year. We update our breast screening locations regularly on our website [here](#).

Equitable access to screening is a priority for us. Our two screening locations in Kerry have public transport links and accessible parking facilities. This is in line with other counties with similar populations and geographical area.

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