



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Cúnta Náisiúnta  
Clár Cúraim Pobail Feabhsaithe &  
Conarthaí Príomhchúraim  
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte

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**Deputy Colm Burke**

**Dáil Eireann,**

**Leinster House,**

**Dublin 2.**

**10<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

**PQ 47459/22 -To ask the Minister for Health his plans to increase direct access to echocardiography for general practitioners through community-based ambulatory care hubs given that 80% of private hospitals provide GP direct access yet only 19% of public hospitals do the same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Colm Burke**

Dear Deputy Burke,

I refer to your parliamentary question which was passed to the HSE for response.

In line with Sláintecare, the Enhanced Community Care Programme (ECC) objective is to deliver increased levels of health care with service delivery reoriented towards general practice, primary care and community-based services. The focus is on implementing an end-to-end care pathway that will care for people at home and over time prevent referrals and admissions to acute hospitals where it is safe and appropriate to do so, and enable a “home first” approach.

The ECC Programme was allocated €240m for the establishment of 96 CHNs, 30 Community Specialist Teams for Older people, 30 Community Specialist Teams for Chronic Disease, national coverage for Community Intervention Teams and the development of a volunteer-type model in collaboration with Alone.

In line with the Enhanced Community Care Programme, the Winter Plan 2020/21 and the National Framework for the Integrated Prevention and Management of Chronic Disease, direct GP access to chronic disease diagnostic services within the community are required to support the provision of person-centred care as close to home as possible. Improved access to chronic disease diagnostic services in the community will allow for timely, accurate diagnosis, early intervention and proactive management of chronic conditions and thus, improved outcomes and hospital avoidance.

In response to your question regarding the increased access to echocardiography for general practitioners through community based ambulatory care hubs, the table below outlines the additional 32 WTE Senior Cardiac Physiologists that have been allocated and funded in each CHO and aligned to the acute hospital group.



The table below outlines the location of the operational Community Specialist Teams:

CHO	Areas	Senior Cardiac Physiologists
CHO 1	Letterkenny Cavan Sligo	3.0 WTE
CHO 2	Galway Portlincula Mayo	3.0 WTE
CHO 3	Limerick	3.0 WTE
CHO 4	CUH and aligned hospitals UHK	4.0 WTE 1.0 WTE
CHO 5	Kilkenny South Tipp Waterford University Hospital Wexford University Hospital	1.0 WTE 1.0 WTE 1.0 WTE 1.0 WTE
CHO 6	St Vincent's hospital	2.0 WTE
CHO 7	St. James' Hospital Tallaght Naas/Kildare	2.0 WTE 1.0 WTE 1.0 WTE
CHO 8	Mullingar Portlaoise OLOL	1.0 WTE 1.0 WTE 2.0 WTE
CHO 9	Mater Beaumont Connolly	1.5 WTE 1.5 WTE 1.0 WTE

Some of these services in the table will commence directly in the Community specialist teams for chronic disease and others will commence in the aligned hospitals and will transition to the community hub. Resources have been allocated to support the service developments.

I trust this is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

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**Geraldine Crowley,**  
**Assistant National Director,**  
**Enhanced Community Care Programme &**  
**Primary Care Contracts**