



Rannán na nOspidéal Ghéarmhíochaine  
Aonad 4A, Áras Dargan  
An Ceantar Theas  
An Bóthar Míleata  
Cill Mhaighneann  
Baile Átha Cliath 8

Acute Operations  
Unit 4A, The Dargan Building  
Heuston South Quarter  
Military Road  
Kilmainham  
Dublin 8

1st March 2023

Deputy Cathal Crowe  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

**PQ 5432/23- To ask the Minister for Health if information files pertaining to patient health are shared between private hospitals and public hospitals, and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Crowe,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The public hospital system has over many years availed of the resources available within the private hospitals. These arrangements have ranged from local agreements between individual hospitals to larger contracts overseen by the National Treatment Purchase Fund. More recently the HSE entered into national agreements with private hospitals in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the event of a patient's referral from a public to a private hospital for treatment, that private hospital may require access to his/her healthcare record in order to deliver the best possible care. In those cases, it will be necessary for the private information to be shared by the public hospital. Upon discharge from the private hospital a discharge letter is issued and this is added to the healthcare record of the public hospital to ensure that all relevant information is available for any future episodes of care.

While the methods of data-sharing vary from hospital to hospital depending on systems in place the safe processing of this highly sensitive data is the HSE's priority. As data controller the HSE has responsibility to ensure that appropriate legal agreements underpin all such arrangements with third parties, such as private hospitals, who act as joint data-controllers of personal data on behalf of the HSE. This responsibility is laid out in the HSE's Data Protection Policy and template data sharing and data processing agreements ensure best practice at all times.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Dunne', written over a horizontal line.

**Brian Dunne**  
General Manager, Acute Operations