



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

Urlár 2, Páirc Ghnó Bhóthar na Modhfheirme,  
Bóthar na Modhfheirme, Corcaigh, T12 HT02

Office of the Assistant National Director  
Enhanced Community Care Programme &  
Primary Care Contracts  
Health Service Executive

Floor 2, Model Business Park,  
Model Farm Road, Cork, T12 HT02

[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)

T: 021-4928512

E: [primarycare.strategy@hse.ie](mailto:primarycare.strategy@hse.ie)

**Deputy Noel Grealish**  
**Dáil Eireann,**  
**Leinster House,**  
**Dublin 2.**

**31<sup>st</sup> July 2023**

**PQ 30814/23 - To ask the Minister for Health if he recognises that remote monitoring of diabetes patients' conditions will free up much-needed doctor and hospital appointments; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Grealish,

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

The HSE is aware of the significant potential that Self- Management Support Education & Empowerment and digital health tools provide. The HSE is presently developing a digital health implementation strategy. The NCP Diabetes is aware of trials such as in the Saolta/CHO2 region where Continuous glucose monitors are in use with people with Diabetes and enable video remote consultations.

### **Technology**

The advent of connected technologies such as insulin pumps, smart insulin pens, and continuous glucose monitors lend themselves to virtual modalities of sharing patient information. For patient populations with less technology literacy or lower Wi-Fi bandwidth, telephone visits are also possible to increase access to necessary care. In addition to medical visits, newer models of virtual care delivery by the entire multidisciplinary team have been trialed during COVID. Further development of health technology platform support and collaboration will be needed.

Presently, intermittently scanned glucose monitors (Free style libres) are provided to people aged 4-21 years in Ireland. There is a need to further expand equitable access to glucose monitors to all adults with diabetes on insulin. NICE guidelines were updated in 2022 and recommend CGM use for all adults with type 1 Diabetes. These devices would enable people with Diabetes to better check and monitor their blood glucose levels.

### **Self-Management Support Education and Empowerment**

Supporting people to self-manage their diabetes through systematic provision of education and supportive interventions increases their skills and confidence and improves outcomes for people living with diabetes ranging from quality of life and clinical outcomes, to reduced healthcare utilisation including hospitalisation.



In Ireland we are expanding the availability of accredited self-management education programmes related to diabetes. A new HSE National Diabetes Prevention Programme aims to delay or prevent the progression to Type 2 Diabetes in those at highest risk. This evidence based behavioural and lifestyle intervention programme is offered in person or online. It provides Self-Management education and support which empowers individuals and groups to engage in healthy behaviours to reduce their risk of progressing to Type 2 Diabetes. Clinical results from the pilot phase demonstrate a mean weight loss of 3.7% at 1 year and improved BMI with an increase from 3% to 12% of the pilot cohort achieving a BMI in the healthy range and a decrease from 44% to 27% of individuals being classified as obese by programme end. Almost half of the completers had returned to normal blood glucose levels at 1 year and the overall results demonstrated that participants gained knowledge, skills and confidence in understanding their risk of Type 2 Diabetes and in their ability to make appropriate lifestyle and behavioural changes to reduce that risk.

Equally exciting results have been demonstrated from the HSE DISCOVER DIABETES Type 2 programme which demonstrated excellent engagement and commitment to Self-Management of individual's condition. Overwhelmingly positive client experience and satisfaction, significant improvements in body weight and HbA1c, and a successful lowering of diabetes distress among those who took part in the programme evaluation. Self- management education programmes for type 1 diabetes and women who have had gestational diabetes are also being advanced across the country. Evidence to date has shown significant improvements across a range of clinical and psychosocial parameters for individuals who engage with these supports.

The Dose Adjustment for Normal Eating (DAFNE) programme for people with Type 1 diabetes has also been provided online.

Further innovations to support this through the use of telehealth, online programmes, and a variety of digital supports are also in progress working with HSE digital. These include eHealth and mHealth innovations: email supports, closed social groups, and enhancing the availability of resources online. The expansion of innovative digital supports to advance care for people living with diabetes is a priority for the ICPCD and will require further supports.

I trust this is of assistance.

**Yours sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Crowley', written over a horizontal line.

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