

General Manager's Office
University Hospital Galway
Newcastle Road
Galway
Tel: (091) 544200

3rd October, 2023

REF: PQ41880/23

RE: Historically Cancer Care West provided support to all cancer patients in Galway University Hospital, they have chosen to employ an in-house psychologist to support those being treated for cancer on the oncology wards only. It is deemed "clinically unnecessary" to provide this support service to those who will not be receiving treatment due to the advanced nature of their disease i.e. they are terminally ill, what is the rationale for this?

Dear Deputy Farrell,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply to you directly in the context of the request for information referenced above.

The National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) developed a model of care for Psycho-Oncology built on the National Cancer Strategy 2017-2026, it sets out in detail how psychosocial support for cancer patients and their families will be developed in Ireland. Psycho-oncology is a multi-disciplinary speciality focusing on the psychological and mental health care of people affected by cancer, their carer's and families. Psycho-Oncology has a valuable role to play at all times during the cancer experience and is concerned with the impact on the patient and the whole family.

The post of Principal Psychologist for Psycho-Oncology/Cancer Services was funded by the NCCP and is a welcomed development to provide psychological assessment and therapy to patients with cancer in Galway University Hospital. The Principal Psychologist for Psycho-Oncology/Cancer Services has developed a referral pathway and there are strong linkages with Palliative care, Cancer Care West and with other Oncology Nursing and Social Work Team members. Patients with cancer who present with distress and warrant psychological intervention are supported through this service, many of whom who may be palliative or terminal / end of life.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Kane
General Manager
Galway University Hospitals