



23rd April 2024

Deputy Róisín Shortall, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ 11367/24

To ask the Minister for Health to outline the training and information provided to general practitioners and general practice nurses in respect of treating long-Covid and making referrals to specialist services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Shortall,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in relation to the above parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have consulted with the National Clinical Director for Integrated Care, who in turn, consulted with the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) on your question, as ICGP is a separate entity to HSE.

I have been informed that the following outlines the ICGP's position with respect to your parliamentary question, noting that training and information provided to General Practitioners and General Practice nurses sits within the remit of ICGP, not HSE.

HSE has been informed by ICGP that:

- There is no specific COVID-19 content in the ICGP curriculum as the curriculum was published prior to emergence of the literature on Long COVID. Nevertheless, the curriculum does contain many of the skills and attitudes relevant to managing symptoms of Long COVID i.e. the generic skills that are applicable to Long COVID and to many other conditions. There are specific learning objectives throughout the curriculum that are relevant;
- A Long COVID Evidence-Based Guide was produced for GPs with support from Infectious Disease Physicians working in Long COVID clinics, in addition to Occupational Therapists and a Psychiatrist with special interest in this particular area. I understand that this guide was published in a GP-targeted magazine, entitled "Forum", which ICGP issues to all members of ICGP and all GP trainees;
- Long COVID was also covered on ICGP webinars in June and October 2021. This online meeting was attended by GPs and practice nurses, with a breakdown of attendance numbers per profession comprising:
 - 02/06/2021 Webinar on Long Covid: 1450 GPs and Practice Nurses attended
 - 06/10/2021 Webinar on Long Covid: 1269 GPs and Practice Nurses attended
- GPs are aware of the protocols and pathways for referring patients to the specialist long COVID clinics and refer patients for this specialist care when required;
- GP nurses operate under the clinical governance of the GP in the practice - practice nurses support the management of Long COVID within their practice population in consultation with the GP.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries I have been advised by ICGP that they are happy to assist with same.

Yours sincerely

General Manager

