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28/04/2025

Mr. Michael Murphy TD  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ 20814/25**

**To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 934 of 25 February 2025, the status of filling the post for an ophthalmologist in Clonmel, the absence of which is causing lengthy waiting times for routine and urgent referrals; and if she will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Murphy,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which was submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

*I have reviewed the matter and the following is the current position.*

The Community Ophthalmologist Physician (COP) Post became vacant following a retirement on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

I wish to confirm that an application to fill the post of Community Ophthalmologist was completed and submitted in line with HSE recruitment policy. In line with National Clinical Programme for Ophthalmology Model of Eye Care 2016 and the Modernised Eye Care Pathway - the Community Ophthalmologist Physician position is being regraded to the position of Consultant Medical Ophthalmologist.

This process is underway in association with the National Clinical Lead for Ophthalmology and for onward submission to the Consultant Application Advisory Committee. In the interim, a replacement locum Ophthalmologist is being sought until a permanent Consultant Medical Ophthalmologist is in post. The Interim Ophthalmologist post has been advertised and several applicants have expressed their interest in this post. Applicants are currently being shortlisted and interviews are due to take place in the coming weeks. Please be assured that once this process is complete, the eye clinic at Community Care, Western Road, Clonmel will resume services. The HSE acknowledges the impact on service users (both paediatric and adults).

For urgent eye care issues, patients from the South Tipperary area may be referred to the Eye Department Service via the Emergency Department pathway at University Hospital Waterford by their General Practitioner.

I trust this information is of assistance to you. Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

**Paul Goff**  
**A/Head of Service-Primary Care**  
**South East Community Healthcare**