



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Cúnta Náisiúnta
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Deputy Aindrias Moynihan,
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

30th April, 2025

PQ : 21339/25 To ask the Minister for Health the rationale on the restriction on the types of MRIs offered under GP access to community diagnostics; the reason below-the-knee MRI is no longer available under this type of diagnostics; and if she will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy Moynihan,

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

GP Access to Community Diagnostics is integral to the Enhanced Community Care programme. The initiative enables direct access to diagnostics (X-ray, CT, MRI, and DEXA) for all GPs nationally for the full population over 16. The scheme builds on pathways already in place for GP direct access to Community Ultrasound. The scheme commenced in January 2021 and delivers circa 240K scans annually.

The Scheme provides GPs with access to a defined list or scope of examinations. To ensure and maintain the delivery of an effective service aligned with community needs and growing demand, the clinical examination scope was reviewed in 2023 and updated as follows:

- A clinical team assessed and reviewed all examinations for each modality in the original examination scope.
- This team reviewed historical referral data, focusing on the most commonly requested examinations by GPs using the scheme.
- Examinations deemed most suitable/clinically appropriate for community follow-up and/or management within GP practice were prioritised for inclusion.
- Examinations where community follow-up and/or management within GP practice is not the most appropriate pathway were excluded, e.g., cancer care or other conditions where management is more appropriate through clinical teams in a hospital setting.

This process was developed to ensure tailored diagnostic pathways meet community clinicians' and patient requirements while optimising healthcare resources. For the reasons outlined, not all MRI examination types are available on the scheme. The providers contracted on the scheme advise patients if the scan type is not covered before the scan takes place to ensure they are aware before proceeding with the scan.

Below is an extract from our most recent FAQ document highlighting what MRIs are covered under the GP Access to Community Diagnostics scheme. This document is publicly available on our webpage (link to the same below).

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/2/primarycare/community-healthcare-networks/gp-diagnostics/>



MRI	
MRI Brain	MRI Thoracic Spine to include thoracolumbar
MRI IAMs	MRI Hip
MRI Brain & IAM's	MRI Knee
MRI Pituitary Contrast	MRI Shoulder
MRI Lumbar Spine	MRI Bony *Pelvis
MRI Lumbosacral Spine	MRI *Pelvis and Hips
MRI SIJ's	MRI Cervical Spine to include cervicothoracic
*Excludes MRI Pelvis Gynae	

Alongside the immediate service provision outlined above, the HSE is developing a longer-term diagnostic strategy to enhance radiology services.

I trust this is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Geraldine Crowley,
Assistant National Director,
Enhanced Community Care Programme &
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