



**Stiúthóra Náisiúnta
Acmhainní Daonna**

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Marian Harkin, T.D.

05 March 2025

PQ 7957/25 (Health) - To ask the Minister for Health for an update on the review of the physician associate role; and if she will make a statement on the matter. -Marian Harkin

Dear Deputy,

I refer to your recent Parliamentary Question which was sent to the HSE for response.

Physician Associates (PAs) are health professionals whose education and training follows the medical model across all specialties. They work as part of a multidisciplinary team with supervision from a named senior doctor (an Irish Medical Council registered consultant or general practitioner), providing care to patients in primary, secondary and community care environments.

The initial evaluation of the Physician Associate pilot, commissioned by the Department of Health, conducted in December 2017 and January 2018 was limited in scope of the evaluation and recommended further significant research. Since this initial pilot and evaluation, the number of Physician Associates currently employed in the HSE has expanded.

The 2025 HSE National Service Plan committed to identifying an independent expert on behalf of the HSE to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the physician associate role internationally and to make recommendations for standardisation, scope of practice, and appropriate deployment in Ireland.

The Independent Reviewer will review the role of the Physician Associate/Assistant and make recommendations regarding the governance of the role, scope of practice, and appropriate deployment in Ireland.

It will consider the benefits and values in the HSE Healthcare system of the role as well as potential risks. The reviewer will give due cognisance to the matters raised and lessons learned in other jurisdictions where this role was introduced.

The terms of reference for this review are nearing completion. The process of identification of the independent expert will commence in March 2025. The review is expected to be completed by the end of 2025

I trust this clarification is of some assistance.

Yours sincerely

Mairéad Ryan
National HR