

Private & Confidential

27th January 2025

Deputy Michael Cahill
Dáil Eireann, Leinster House,
Kildare St, Dublin 2

Dear Deputy Cahill,

Ref PQ 46597 :

To ask the Minister for Health if a dedicated Lyme disease diagnosis and treatment facility can be set up, staffed and funded at University Hospital Kerry, adjacent to Killarney National Park, home of Ireland's largest numbers of deer, largely responsible for the spread of this debilitating disease; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Michael Cahill

The above referred Parliamentary Question on various matters at University Hospital Kerry, has been submitted to this office, for response :

Response provided by University Hospital Kerry:

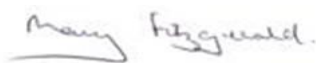
The National Protection Surveillance Centre (NPSC) estimate that around 200 people per annum have a positive blood test for Lyme Disease. Accordingly, serology testing, diagnosis and treatment facilities for complex cases are located at Infectious Diseases Departments across Tertiary level Hospitals nationwide.

Each of the HSE Groups have Consultants in Infectious Diseases who are experts in management of Lyme Disease. Specifically in the case of Kerry, where indicated, serology tests against the pathogen responsible for Lyme disease, (Borrelia), are done in the serology department of Cork University Hospital. It is worth noting that Common antibiotics are effective at clearing the infection and early symptoms and in helping to prevent the development of complications.

The NPSC depict that just 0.08% per 100,000 of population go on to develop complications – Per the data publically available on their website, this equates to 4 cases in 2001 and 4 cases in 2022. Given the relatively low volume of patients diagnosed per annum, it would neither be an efficient use of resources, feasible nor economically viable to locate units outside of Tertiary Referral Centres.

I trust this response is to your satisfaction; should you have any further queries however, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Mary Fitzgerald
General Manager
University Hospital Kerry