



***Hospital Manager's Office
Letterkenny University Hospital, Letterkenny,
Co. Donegal F92 AE81***

Telephone: (074) 9123501

Fax: (074) 9104651

15th July 2025

Deputy Doherty,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ : PQ 36245/25

Re: To ask the Minister for Health the percentage of blood tests for Letterkenny University Hospital that are outsourced from March 2024; the cost of this outsourcing during this period; the cost of doing the same percentage of blood tests in-house over the same period; and if she will make a statement on the matter. -Pearse Doherty

Dear Deputy Doherty

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Currently LUH Laboratory Department processes blood tests for both the Community (GPs and Enhanced Community Care Programmes) and inpatients and outpatients at LUH. In 2019 the laboratory processed 3,970,087 tests per annum and in 2022 processed 6,998,990 blood tests. This has been an increase of 78% within this time period.

2019 3,970,087 tests
2022 6,998,990 tests
2024 7,166,450 tests (including outsourced bloods @ 5.5%)

This testing is completed using 2 lines of 3 analysers per line. These analysers run from 8am until 8pm with an on call service being provided from 8pm until 8am which require the use of same analysers. Since 2022 the service has experienced capacity issues resulting in the analysers being run up until 2am routinely at full capacity and this resulted in staff burnout as only an on-call service is employed from 8pm until 8am for emergency only.



***Hospital Manager's Office
Letterkenny University Hospital, Letterkenny,
Co. Donegal F92 AE81***

Telephone: (074) 9123501

Fax: (074) 9104651

Since March 2024, 5.5% of the total GP workload is being outsourced, this is because the Pathology Department are unable to meet demand within existing space and they do not have the sufficient number of analysers to perform tests within routine working hours. The existing floor space has been assessed and determined that it is not possible to install a new analyser without an extension to accommodate an additional analyser line and associated equipment.

Outsourcing has cost LUH €1.2 million from March 2024 to March 2025. It is estimated that the cost will be in excess of €105,000 if the physical space existed to install the third line of analyser. LUH Management and the Pathology Service Management have been working with HSE estates and Procurement over the last two years to try to secure a solution to allow these samples to be processed in house.

In order to progress the proposed extension a Strategic Health Infrastructure Framework (SHIF) alignment form has been completed. The completion of the SHIF Alignment Form is a multi-stakeholder process and must include input, coordination with, and sign-off from all relevant stakeholders. This form is to capture the collaborative process to establish if there is a capital requirement. The form is managed by HSE Capital and Estates but requires the area that is requesting capital to lead the process and provide the information required.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

Seán Murphy
Hospital Manager
Letterkenny University Hospital