



30 July 2025

Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 39814/25

To ask the Minister for Health her plans to alleviate high levels of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder suffered by heart failure patients by increasing access to psychological support which only a fraction of heart failure patients can currently access; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Ó Fearghaíl,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in relation to the above parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have consulted with the National Heart Programme (NHP) on your question and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

The HSE's National Heart Programme's (NHP) Heart Failure Model of Care (2021)¹ advises a psychologist as a one of the key community staff requirements to support General Practitioners (GPs) in the treatment of heart failure. Funding was made available for 1 day per week (0.2 WTE) to provide a psychologist as part of cardiac rehabilitation teams in the Specialist Ambulatory Care Hubs for chronic disease being established in the community as part of the Enhanced Community Care Programme. This service will include the treatment of heart failure patients.

The HSE's National Heart Programme's (NHP) is supporting implementation of the HSE's Model of Care for Integrated Cardiac Rehabilitation (MOC CR)² to deliver a high quality, equitable, person-centred and evidence-based cardiac rehabilitation (CR) service. There is strong evidence indicating the benefits of early access to cardiac rehabilitation in terms of improving both physical and mental health outcomes for patients with cardiovascular disease (including heart failure). Best practice and international evidence for the cardiac rehabilitation multi-disciplinary team recommends inclusion of psychology expertise, in addition to other disciplines.

Funding was allocated for new service developments of cardiovascular services in 2025, for thirteen new posts, including 3 x 0.5 WTE clinical psychology posts, to support the implementation and evaluation of the HSE's Model of Care for Integrated Cardiac Rehabilitation (2023)² in two Integrated Health Area (IHA) regions in the Health Region HSE West and North West. This project is a proof of concept of implementation of the HSE's Model of Care for Integrated Cardiac Rehabilitation. A standardised model of cardiac rehabilitation across acute and community will be implemented in the region in line with the National Model of Care.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Horgan
General Manager



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References:

1. <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/cspd/icp/chronic-disease/moc/national-heart-failure-model-of-care-2021.pdf>
2. <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/model-of-care-for-integrated-cardiac-rehabilitation.pdf>