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BY EMAIL ONLY

Deputy James O'Connor
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
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26th May 2025

PQ 26494/25- To ask the Minister for Health if any reviews or audits of the expenditure on laboratory genetic testing services both in Ireland and abroad have been undertaken to ensure value-for-money and to assess the effectiveness of outsourcing; if it is the intention to support local accredited capacity; and if she will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy O'Connor,

Thank you for your representation.

At present, individual hospitals are responsible for arranging genomic testing services this includes ensuring efficiency and value for money in public spending. The HSE's National Genetics and Genomics Office (NGGO) was established in 2023 to implement the National Strategy for Accelerating Genetic and Genomic Medicine in Ireland (2022), and its activities include coordinating a national approach to genetics and genomics, ensuring patient and public involvement (PPI) and partnerships, building the genetics and genomics workforce for the future, enhancing genetic and genomic clinical services, and strengthening infrastructures to drive advances in genetics and genomics.

At the end of 2024, the NGGO published the first version of the National Genomic Test Directory for Rare and Inherited Disease. The NGGO, with support from my department, is also advancing the development of a centralised National Genomic Processing Service (NGPS).

The NGPS will support the use of the Test Directory and will be a hub for receipt of specimens from hospitals across Ireland to refer for genomic testing by quality assured laboratories abroad. Separate to the development of the NGPS, the NGGO will work with HSE procurement to identify a process for the procurement of genomic tests included in the Test Directory. The procurement of testing will be governed by the Office of Government Procurement's guidelines to ensure transparency, efficiency, and value for money.

The NGGO will continue working closely with the Department of Health in advancing the implementation of the National Strategy for Accelerating Genetic and Genomic Medicine in Ireland.

I hope this provides you with some assistance.

Yours sincerely

Sharon Hayden
General Manager
Office of the Chief Clinical Officer