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Date: 22nd September 2025

PQ – 45776/25

Deputy Liam Quaide
Dail Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

To ask the Minister for Health her plans to expand the oral immunotherapy programme for children with peanut and tree nut allergies at Cork University Hospital to children aged five years and older; and is she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Quaide

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

Cork University Hospital (CUH) provides Ireland's only oral immunotherapy (OIT) programme for peanut and tree nut allergies. Our current OIT service for children under five years of age is delivered as an integral component of CUH's allergy service, with more than 120 new patients in the programme since May 2025. This success aligns with the Allergy service's expansion and increase of 160% delivery of new appointments from 2021 to 2024.

In addition, we are establishing outreach supra-regional clinics that will bring specialty allergy clinics closer to the homes of children within the HSE Southwest RHA, and to surrounding areas (including Limerick, Clonmel, and Kilkenny).

We strongly support expanding OIT access to children aged five years and older across Ireland. The CUH Allergy currently has capacity to provide this for children across Southern Ireland. We would be open to expanding our OIT programme to provide a national service, under clear, phased timelines. This would require additional staffing (clinical and administrative), additional clinic capacity and infrastructure, and appropriate resourcing for governance, training, and monitoring. CUH is ready to work with the HSE and the Department of Health to develop this strategy and agree an implementation plan and timelines. With necessary supports in place, we can extend Ireland's

only OIT programme to older children, maintaining the highest standards of safety, quality, and equity of access.

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,

Jennifer Kearney
Chief Executive Officer