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PQ48414/25: To ask the Minister for Health the steps being taken to ensure cancer patients have access to up-to-date radiotherapy comparable to international best practice; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Clarke,

The NCP develop a suite of National Clinical Guidelines which integrate the best current evidence with clinical expertise and patient values. These National Clinical Guidelines aim to reduce variation in practice, improve patient outcomes, including their experience of care, and promote the judicious use of resources. The NCCP develop guidelines to ensure practice is up-to-date, evidence-based and in line with international best practice. The following National Clinical Guidelines for cancer have been recently published or are in development and make recommendations in relation to radiotherapy:

- HSE National Clinical Guideline: Treatment of patients with breast cancer (radiation oncology) (2023). This guideline is currently being updated and is scheduled for publication in November 2025. This will be the first NCCP living guideline with evidence being reviewed on a continuous basis.
- HSE National Clinical Guideline: Neoadjuvant treatment of patients with locally advanced rectal cancer (2024). This guideline was developed to address new and emerging evidence and replaces a section of the National Clinical Guideline: Diagnosis, staging and treatment of patients with rectal cancer (2020). It addresses a multimodality treatment approach for this patient cohort, including radiotherapy.
- National Clinical Guideline: Diagnosis, staging and treatment of patients with prostate cancer (2015, updated 2025). This guideline is currently being updated in a modular fashion. (See HSE National Clinical Guideline: Diagnosis and staging of patients with prostate cancer (2022); HSE National Clinical Guideline: Active surveillance for patients with prostate cancer (2025)). The treatment section of this guideline is currently being updated by the NCCP and will include the latest evidence with regards to radiation oncology.

A link to HSE National Clinical Guidelines can be found here:
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/cancer/profinfo/guidelines/>

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Bonas
AND, National Cancer Control Programme