

17th April 2019

PQ 13648/19 To ask the Minister for Health if the HSE has admitted that it is accepting liability for those that contracted tuberculosis during the recent outbreak at Galway University Hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Catherine Connolly

Dear Deputy Connolly

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply to you directly in the context of the request for information referenced above, the following outlines the situation.

Cases of tuberculosis (TB) are identified in Galway University Hospitals (GUH) several times each year. TB is an infectious disease caused by bacteria. It can be spread by breathing in these bacteria if they are sneezed or coughed by someone who has TB in their lungs. TB is not very infectious; close, prolonged contact with a sick person is usually needed to become infected.

In the last five years there have been on average 26 cases per year diagnosed in counties Galway, Mayo and Roscommon, which is about one new case every two weeks. TB is a notifiable disease and the Health Protection Surveillance Centre publishes weekly figures on the number of cases of notifiable infectious diseases by HSE area on their website at www.hpsc.ie/notifiablediseases/weeklyidreports/

If a patient is suspected of possibly having TB they are isolated and the necessary infection prevention and control precautions are taken. Patients with known or suspected pulmonary Tuberculosis are admitted to a negative pressure single room or if no negative pressure single room is available they should be nursed in an ensuite isolation single room as per Hospital guidelines.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely



Chris Kane
General Manager
Galway University Hospitals