



Dearadh agus Nuálaíocht Chliniciúil; Oifig an Príohifigeach Cliniciúil
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Deputy Carol Nolan, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 42456/21

To ask the Minister for Health if he will take steps to ensure that heart failure virtual clinics will be rolled out as a priority; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Nolan,

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 on your question and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

Appropriate use of specialist advice and avoiding need for hospital and outpatient attendance is a key target of the National Heart Programme. Recognising that giving GPs access to senior specialist advice in a structured and timely manner will avert need for OPD and emergency department referral led to the development of the idea of virtual consultation (VC) where GPs, practice nurses and specialist staff interact using webconference technology to discuss and manage cases collaboratively. This also allows simultaneous education for the group. This allows for direct specialist diagnostic access for patients discussed at VC, where appropriate. The VC service should lead to a reduction in the need for onward referral to routine outpatients, leading to a reduction in unnecessary travel for many.

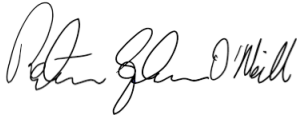
These services were first piloted in the St Vincent's University Hospital catchment area and then in Carlow-Kilkenny area. Integrated Care Clinical Nurse Specialists also support GP's to refer patients into the heart failure virtual consultation clinic in the St Vincent's/ St Michael's Hospital Heart Failure Unit. These services have now been mainstreamed.

Consolidation and scale-up of these two integrated care services were the basis for the Slaintecare Integration Fund (SIF) Project 237 – Heart Failure Virtual Consultation (HFVC) Service with Integrated Care Clinical Nurse Specialist Supports (IC CNS') in the Community. This project has allowed expansion of the service in the East Coast as well as establishment of a new service in the Dublin North/ Mater Hospital area. The service established as part of SIF 237 is now being subsumed into the Enhanced Community Care Programme (ECCP) and delivered as part of the Integrated Care Programme for Chronic Disease.

As part of Phase 1 of the ECCP funding has been made available to support 18 Integrated Care Specialist Ambulatory Care Hubs in the community, with an additional 12 hubs also planned. The virtual consultation service will be an essential part of the integrated care cardiology service in each of the 30 community hubs.

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,



Patricia Gilsean O'Neill
General Manager, Business Management Office