



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Cúnta Náisiúnta
Clár Cúraim Pobail Feabhsaithe &
Conarthaí Príomhchúraim
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte

Urlár 2, Páirc Ghnó Bhóthar na Modhfheirme,
Bóthar na Modhfheirme, Corcaigh, T12 HT02

Office of the Assistant National Director
Enhanced Community Care Programme &
Primary Care Contracts
Health Service Executive

Floor 2, Model Business Park,
Model Farm Road, Cork, T12 HT02

www.hse.ie

T: 021-4928512

E: primarycare.strategy@hse.ie

Deputy Duncan Smith,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2.

6th December 2023

PQ 53534/23 - To ask the Minister for Health for an update on the hepatitis C home testing kits; the number of kits that have been dispatched in CHO3; if the scheme is proving successful; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Smith,

I refer to your parliamentary question, which was passed to the HSE for response.

The HSE established a National Hepatitis C Treatment Programme (NHCTP) in 2015 and began the process of providing treatment for hepatitis C using Directly Acting Antivirals (DAA's) to patients prioritised according to clinical need. Since 2016, the HSE in its National Service Plans has committed to the continued implementation of a multi annual public health plan for the therapeutic treatment of hepatitis C. Since 2015 the National Hepatitis C Treatment programme has provided treatment to over 7,000 patients treated. It is estimated at least 50-60% of the potential number of people in Ireland with hepatitis C are not aware of their diagnosis and therefore in order for the Programme to achieve its aim of making hepatitis C a rare disease by 2026, the focus has turned to identifying the population and case finding.

Achieving this aim will require identification and treatment of the majority of chronically infected individuals in the community. In this regard, the home testing kit for hepatitis C launched on the 5 April 2023 along with a proactive media campaign to promote the new service and the awareness of hepatitis C and the need to 'get tested and treated'. The service is currently in the process of initiating the second phase of the advertising campaign with focus on a public service approach.

As of 30th November a total of 4555 home testing kits have been dispatched with 204 dispatched from CHO 3. From November, OraQuick swabs are offered as an alternative test to a blood test to users who have advised that taking blood was a barrier to them returning their testing kit.

This new service will enable hepatitis C testing to become more available throughout Ireland. To our knowledge, Ireland is the first country to establish a publicly funded home testing service for hepatitis C. The referral pathway is running very smoothly and feedback from patients has been very positive.

I trust this is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Geraldine Crowley,
Assistant National Director,
Enhanced Community Care Programme &
Primary Care Contracts