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Deputy Louise O'Reilly, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 47414/23

To ask the Minister for Health if he is aware that failure to fund stroke services in 2024 as part of the National Stroke Strategy 2022-2027 will result in greater numbers of patients remaining in hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy O'Reilly,

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 Clinical Programme (NCP) for Stroke on your question and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

The HSE's Stroke Strategy 2022-2027 was developed to address the burden of stroke at a patient, organisational and system level with a clear direction for stroke care in Ireland in line with international standards. The strategy will assist in addressing the challenge faced in Ireland with the predicted increase in the total number of strokes in Europe, an ageing demography and the rapidly changing milieu of acute stroke treatment.

The Strategy provides a blueprint for the required investment over a 5 year timeline (2022-2027), to deliver on key priorities under the pillars of:

1. Stroke Prevention;
2. Acute Care and Cure;
3. Rehabilitation and Restoration to Life;
4. Education and Research.

The National Clinical Programme for Stroke sees implementation of the National Stroke Strategy 2022-2027 as important in preventing stroke, avoiding poor outcomes, reducing length of stay and maximising a full return to life after stroke. Planning for and implementation of the strategy began 2023.

Early Supported Discharge Teams (ESD) for stroke is an international evidence-based model of care enhancing rehabilitation and restoration to activities of daily living with better outcomes for patients. This model of care supports patients to return home from hospital earlier than usual and to receive more rehabilitation in the familiar environment of their own home. Phase 1 of ESD expansion is near completion and NCP Stroke plans to consolidate implementation of these services.



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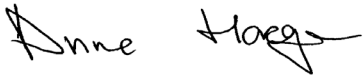
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Primary prevention of stroke is a key ambition of the strategy. Many strokes are preventable and principal risk factors for stroke, high blood pressure and atrial fibrillation are increasing in prevalence. A key priority aligned to implementation of the stroke strategy includes extension of the current General Practitioner (GP) Agreement to include screening for hypertension in patients over 45 years of age, as part of the prevention element of the programme. Agreement has been reached between the Department of Health (DoH), Health Service Executive (HSE) and Irish Medical Organisation (IMO) to include the opportunistic case finding and management of Hypertension (HTN) Stage 1 for patients over 45 years of age in the HSE's Chronic Disease Management Prevention Programme. It is intended that this will be available to patients in Q1 2024.

HSE is currently awaiting the Letter of Determination (LOD) 2024 to be issued from the Department of Health to the HSE. This LOD will formally set out the resources being allocated to the HSE for 2024.

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



Anne Horgan
General Manager