



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta
Géaroibríochtaí

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Deputy David Cullinane
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2.

11th April 2024

PQ 15428/24

To ask the Minister for Health the number of hospital-initiated scheduled care cancellations, by appointment type, for each quarter of each year 2022-2024, inclusive, by hospital group and hospital, in tabular form.

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Response:

Hospitals and Hospital Groups working with the HSE worked in 2022 to develop a process for the collection and collation of data on scheduled care cancellations. Data collection commenced in February 2022 and over the subsequent months became streamlined and now forms as part of a process that is in place for weekly collection of data associated with Hospital initiated cancellations. Data collected is subject to ongoing validation.

As the data collection process around cancellations commenced in Q1 2022, it was Q2 2022 before all sites were reporting cancellations and therefore the 12-month period in 2022 would not be reflective of a full year and as such should not be compared with 2023.

The following information has been provided:

The number of hospital-initiated scheduled care cancellations, by appointment type, for each quarter for each year 2022-2024 (to date), inclusive by hospital group and hospital, in tabular form.



Additional context:

Our Acute Hospitals deliver c3.5 million outpatient appointments; c1.1 million daycase episodes of care; and over 600,000 inpatient episodes of care on an annual basis.

Management of patient scheduling and cancellations of planned activity is conducted in line with the protocols for outpatient and inpatient/day case, links below:

- <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/3/acutehospitals/patientcare/protocol-for-the-management-of-outpatient-services-and-guidance-documents/national-outpatient-waiting-list-management-protocol-2022.pdf>
- <https://www.ntpf.ie/home/pdf/National%20Waiting%20List%20Management%20Protocol.pdf>

Aligned with the protocols patients that are cancelled are rescheduled within 6 weeks/the next available appointment based on their clinical prioritisation, with urgent patients prioritised for access. Clinical guidance will also be sought when managing and rescheduling patients cancelled by the hospital. This is necessary to ensure that urgent and vulnerable patients are rescheduled appropriately.

Definition of a hospital-initiated inpatient/day case cancellation:

A hospital-initiated cancellation of an outpatient or inpatient/day case procedure is defined as the rescheduling of a patient To Come In (TCI) date by the hospital due to circumstances beyond its control.

Reasons for cancellation of scheduled care appointments:

- I. Increased ED attendances and admissions resulting in a requirement for surge inpatient bed capacity.
- II. Unforeseen circumstances e.g., Weather events, infection outbreaks or industrial action.
- III. Sick leave/Staffing shortages can impact scheduled/planned activities.
- IV. Although new patients are scheduled within 6 weeks of their appointment, return patients are often scheduled months in advance and may have to be cancelled and rescheduled due to changes in service delivery model.

I trust that this answers your question.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trish King', written over a horizontal line.

Trish King
Acute Operations