



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Cúnta Náisiúnta
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Conarthaí Príomhchúraim
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Deputy John Brady,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2.

16th September 2024

PQ 29820/24: To ask the Minister for Health for a breakdown of the number of GPs operating in each county, per capita, in Q1 and/or Q2 2024 or the latest available data (for example, end-2023), in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Brady,

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

There are 3,136 GPs with a public contract (c. 2538 GMS & c. 598 others) and c.864 GPs including those who work privately, GPs in training and International Medical Graduate (IMG) participants. Please refer to Appendix 1 outlining the number of General Practitioners (GMS GPs and GPs registered to provide other services) that are in practice in each county broken down into CHO area as at the 1st July 2024.

GP Agreement 2023 – Rural Practices and Areas of Urban Deprivation

A number of measures are included in the GP Agreement 2023, in relation to maintaining GMS GP services in isolated rural and urban disadvantaged communities, including pilot initiatives whereby qualifying GMS practices, where a vacancy has arisen due to retirement /resignation/death of the outgoing single-handed GP, may form an affiliation with a larger practice involving two or more GMS GPs within the nearest population centre.

In addition, to providing financial supports and initiatives to address the current challenges in filling GMS vacancies in rural and urban disadvantaged areas in particular, the 2023 GP Agreement also provides for increased supports to GPs to maintain and increase capacity in general practices. This includes enhanced Practice Support Subsidies and the introduction of a new form of practice grant towards the cost of employing additional practice staff and/or increase in hours of existing practice staff, together with the introduction of a new role of GP Practice Assistant. The 2023 Agreement also makes provision for additional supports for GMS GP practices in rural communities in sourcing locum cover, for periods of approved leave.

Expansion of GP Training

The HSE is working closely with the Irish College of General Practitioners on a range of measures to expand the GP Workforce and in developing a sustainable model of General Practice for the future in line with Sláintecare. GP training places have increased from an intake of 259 in 2022 to 286 in 2023 and an intake of 350 in 2024. The total number of trainees undertaking the four-year programme will increase from the current 1,044 to 1,300 in 2026 – a 25% increase. Funding has been provided in the 2024 budget to enable the HSE and the ICGP to implement this initiative at pace.



International Medical Graduate (IMG) Programme

The International Medical Graduates (IMG) Programme, is an initiative supported by the ICGP, HSE and the IMO aimed at expanding GP workforce in rural and urban disadvantaged areas. In 2023, a total of 121 candidates were successfully enrolled to the scheme, 75 of which had commenced in general practice by year end. As of April 2024, 141 candidates have been offered places with 100 working in General Practice. Recruitment is ongoing, with the aim of recruiting 250 doctors in 2024. This has a very immediate impact on GP shortages. The new additional posts will work in General Practice for a 2 year period, following which they can take up an Irish GMS contract. The initiative is targeted at rural areas, areas of urban deprivation and those difficult to fill posts in various geographical locations across the country. The initiative in 2023 has helped ease the pressures on GP Practices in the southwest, southeast, midlands and western seaboard.

General Practice Strategic Review

The Minister for Health has established a Strategic Review of General Practice. The Review is being led by the Department of Health, with support from the HSE and input from key stakeholders, including the IMO and ICGP. The Review is examining the issues affecting general practice including GP training, GP capacity, Out of Hours services reform, the eHealth Agenda, and the financial support model for general practice.

The Review will then identify the arrangements necessary to improve the current system of GP care as part of a primary care-focused health service and in line with the Sláintecare vision on access.

Following its conclusion, a report will be presented to the Minister for Health giving an assessment of the challenges affecting general practice and setting out the actions needed to provide for a more sustainable GP service. Meetings of the Joint Department of Health/HSE Steering Group are ongoing and engagement with relevant stakeholders is currently underway.

I trust this is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Crowley', written over a horizontal line.

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



Appendix 1:

Source: HSE Primary Care Reimbursement Service- Data as at 1st of July 2024

| Community Healthcare Organisation | General Practitioners |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| CHO Area 1 | 243 |
| Cavan / Monaghan | 73 |
| Donegal | 102 |
| Sligo / Leitrim / West Cavan | 68 |
| CHO Area 2 | 325 |
| Galway | 202 |
| Mayo | 89 |
| Roscommon | 34 |
| CHO Area 3 | 257 |
| Clare | 53 |
| North Tipp./East Limerick | 53 |
| Limerick | 151 |
| CHO Area 4 | 477 |
| South Lee | 151 |
| North Lee | 121 |
| West Cork | 46 |
| Kerry | 102 |
| North Cork | 57 |
| CHO Area 5 | 302 |
| Carlow/Kilkenny | 86 |
| Waterford | 81 |
| South Tipperary | 58 |
| Wexford | 77 |
| CHO Area 6 | 324 |
| Dun Laoghaire | 118 |
| Dublin South East | 115 |
| Wicklow | 91 |
| CHO Area 7 | 456 |
| Dublin South City | 127 |
| Dublin South West | 117 |
| Dublin West | 82 |
| Kildare / West Wicklow | 130 |
| CHO Area 8 | 338 |
| Louth | 82 |
| Meath | 86 |
| Laois / Offaly | 81 |
| Longford / Westmeath | 89 |
| CHO Area 9 | 414 |
| Dublin North West | 107 |
| Dublin North Central | 143 |
| Dublin North | 164 |
| National | 3136 |

Included in the above table are the following;

(i) 598 GPs not contracted to the GMS Scheme who are register to provide Services under the Primary Childhood Immunisation Scheme, the Health(Amendment) Act 1996, Heartwatch, Methadone Treatment Scheme and National Cancer Screening Service.