



24<sup>th</sup> June, 2024

Deputy Leo Varadkar, TD  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

**PQ 25142/24**

**To ask the Minister for Health if he is aware that Ireland continues to have poor outcomes for respiratory illnesses like COPD according to OECD statistics; and if he will make a statement on the matter**

Dear Deputy Varadkar,

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 Advisor and Group Lead for Chronic Disease (NCAGL CD) and the National Clinical Programme (NCP) for Respiratory on your question and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

The National Healthcare Quality Reporting System (NHQRS) Report 2023 from the DOH reports the latest (2022) OECD data for COPD and Asthma. For both COPD and Asthma, the 2022 figures show Ireland's rate of hospitalisation remains higher than the OECD average. However, hospitalisation rates are significantly lower than the 2019 pre-pandemic rate.

In 2022, the national age-sex standardised hospitalisation rate for COPD was 259.31 per 100,000 population, significantly lower than the 2019 pre-pandemic rate of 361.73.

The HSE's National Clinical Programme (NCP) for Respiratory, as part of the Integrated Care Programme for Chronic Disease (ICPCD), works alongside the HSE's Enhanced Community Care (ECC) Programme, with focus on the implementation of the Integrated Models of Care for COPD and Asthma. These models of care use an end-to-end patient-centred integrated approach for the prevention, early detection, slowing of disease progression and the provision of optimal management for people with COPD and Asthma.

The HSE models of care for COPD and Asthma are aligned with the Sláintecare vision of 'Right Care, Right Place and Right Time'. Community Specialist Respiratory Teams within Integrated Respiratory Services are in place and this new way of working is already shifting patient care to the left, away from acute hospitals.

There are several quality initiatives in progress for COPD and Asthma, which aim to improve patient outcomes and are expected to impact on OECD figures pertaining to Ireland over the coming years.

These include:

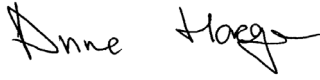
- GP Chronic Disease Management Programme;
- The ECC 30 Chronic Disease Hubs, which are affiliated to acute hospitals and include respiratory specialist ambulatory care teams and 25 new Integrated Respiratory Consultant posts;
- Increased numbers of integrated pulmonary rehabilitation teams;
- Increased numbers of COPD Outreach teams to support:
  - Admission avoidance,
  - Early supported discharge from ED,
  - Early supported hospital discharge;



- Governmental tobacco control policy (including e-cigarettes) and increased availability of HSE smoking cessation services.

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**

