



08/11/2024

Deputy Brendan Smith
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ Number: PQ 43818/24

Question: To ask the Minister for Health if he will ensure that a healthcare facility is facilitated with the allocation of personnel (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Brendan Smith

Details Supplied: in order to ensure an assignment of Medical Interns to Cavan Monaghan Hospital in July 2025 will the NDTP increase numbers that can then be ringfenced for Cavan Monaghan Hospital by the Minister taking into account that this is the only level 3 hospital in the country without interns; if the Minister cannot have such an increase in numbers can a reallocation of interns from private institutions which are publicly funded or can the RCSI be instructed to reallocate interns to ensure that Cavan Monaghan Hospital have an intake for July 2025? Can the Minister ensure that there will be an assignment of interns for Cavan Monaghan Hospital in July 2025?

Dear Deputy Smith,

In Ireland, the intern year is a pre-registration year required by medical graduates in order to be eligible for full registration with the Medical Council. The purpose of the intern year, in the first instance, is for training rather than service delivery. As such the standards for intern training are set by the Medical Council and the programme is delivered by the Intern Networks overseen by the Medical Schools. The responsibility for the allocation of Intern posts lies solely with the Medical Schools who are accredited by the Medical Council.

Doctors undertaking their internship rotate through clinical sites deemed educationally suitable for the purposes of Intern training by the relevant Medical School through the training site inspection process. The purpose of a training site inspection is to determine and monitor the ability of an institution to deliver Intern and Specialist training in a specialty, in accordance with the current accreditation standards developed by the Medical Council along with the relevant curriculum of training.

The HSE has a statutory role in projecting and approving on an annual basis the numbers, type and skill-set of medical trainees, including interns, required in each specialty to meet the current and future needs of the Irish healthcare system. Intern places are determined by workforce planning requirements in line with government policy. The national number of intern posts is currently 879, and is set to remain at 879 for the July 2025 training year.

Between 2020 and 2023, the number of Intern posts increased by 20%. This expansion of Intern posts has been to ensure continued alignment with the numbers of training posts available in specialist training programmes. The HSE was informed by the relevant Intern Network that following a site inspection in March 2024 Cavan hospital was approved as a prospective training site for interns. The HSE welcome this development as it aligns with the Model 3 report, which recommends that Hospitals that do not have interns assigned or trainees in a number of



specialties should work with the relevant Medical Schools, training bodies or regulator to meet the requirements to have these posts recognised for training and assigned to their hospital.

From a workforce planning perspective further increases in the number of intern posts to continue to keep pace with future expansion of training programmes will be required to ensure a sufficient pipeline of trainees for increases in Consultant and GP posts. This has been noted most recently within the National Taskforce (2024). The HSE does not have a role in identifying or approving clinical sites or posts for the purposes of a training programme. In order to increase Intern posts further funding will be required from the Department of Health. It is important to note that should the National Number of Intern posts increase in future years, the responsibility for identification of educationally suitable Intern rotations rests solely with the Medical Council and the Medical schools as the accredited bodies by the Medical Council for delivery of the training programme.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leah O'Toole". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a light grey rectangular background.

Leah O'Toole
Assistant National Director