



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta Cúnta
Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte

Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin, Baile Phámar,
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Deputy Mark Ward
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

13th September 2024

PQ Number: 34056/24

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 157 of 12 July 2022, to clarify whether the stated target of four authorised officers per 10,000 is 10,000 of the total population (i.e. over 2,000 authorised officers based on a population of over 5 million); when the HSE capacity review of authorised officers will be published; and if he will make a statement on the matter -Mark Ward

Dear Deputy Ward,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Unfortunately, there was an error in the original 2022 response, the target for authorised officers should have read four per hundred thousand population (4/100,000). I apologise for any confusion. With a population of five million the target would therefore be two hundred Authorised Officers. As noted in the original response in 2022, the number of Authorised Officers rose from 126 in 2021 to 156 in 2022.

As you can see from the table below there has been a continued increase to 208 in 2023, and currently stands at 218 trained Authorised Officers in 2024.

AOs
2023

CHO Area	Population	Delegated Authorised Officers	recommended number of AO's @ 4 Per 100,000	Surplus/deficit
1	389,048	32	16	16
2	445,000	27	18	9
3	379,327	17	15	2
4	664,533	12	26	-14
5	479,578	19	20	-1

AOs
2024

CHO Area	Population	Delegated Authorised Officers	recommended number of AO's @ 4 Per 100,000	Surplus/deficit
1	389,048	33	16	17
2	445,000	28	18	10
3	379,327	18	15	3
4	664,533	12	26	-14
5	479,578	22	20	2



6	364,464	12	15	-3
7	674,071	29	27	2
8	592,388	29	24	5
9	581,486	29	23	6
0 (CM H)		2		
Tota l		208	184	22

6	364,464	12	15	-3
7	674,071	31	27	4
8	592,388	31	24	7
9	581,486	29	23	6
0 (CM H)		2		
Tota l		218	184	32

While we have surpassed the target on a national basis we continue to offer training with particular focus on CHO areas where there is a deficit of available Authorised Officers.

As you are aware, the new Mental Health Bill is proceeding to the second stage in the Oireachtas. When enacted it will place a greater emphasis on the role and involvement of Authorised Officers in involuntary admissions.

As there may be amendments to the Bill in the legislative process towards enactment, the HSE will continue to liaise with the Department of Health on any implementation plan prior to the commencement of the new act to ensure the availability of the requisite Authorised Officer service.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Mc Cusker
General Manager
National Mental Health Services