

NS/WOD/MC

Email: pgmidwestacute@hse.ie

01st October 2024

Mr Willie O'Dea TD,
Dàil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

PQ 35422/24

To ask the Minister for Health if he is aware that despite the recruitment embargo being lifted, the oncology ward of UHL has lost over a dozen nurses with no new nurses appointed to replace these staff, resulting in chemotherapy being cancelled; his plans to deal with this staffing crisis; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Willie O'Dea

Dear Deputy O'Dea,

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.

No patient at the Mid Western Cancer Centre has had their chemotherapy cancelled due to staffing levels.

In recent weeks, however, compliance with the NCCP target of commencing treatment within 15 working days has reduced. This is due not only to staffing levels but also to a significant increase in demand for cancer treatments. Any delay in commencing treatment is deeply regretted by our staff, for whom timely access to treatment for our patients is a top priority.

We are currently working within the national HSE Pay & Numbers Strategy and the regional employment ceilings to fill vacant posts across our services, including in cancer services.

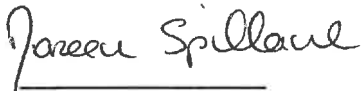
We have recently interviewed and created a staff nurse oncology panel. Once the appropriate and necessary approval is received, employment offers will be progressed to this panel.

Over the coming months, there are five approved nursing WTEs due to commence in Cancer Services. The Regional Executive Officer of HSE Mid West has also approved the recruitment of a further eight staff nurse positions in cancer services and the recruitment process will now commence for these posts.

We also expect a fifth consultant medical oncologist to take up post before the end of this year.

I trust this clarifies the position, please contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



Ms Noreen Spillane
Acting Chief Executive Officer
UL Hospitals Group