



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Príomhúil

Seomra 243, Ospidéal Dr Steevens,
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17th February 2022

Deputy Denis Naughten,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 5710/22 - To ask the Minister for Health the engagement undertaken to date with long-Covid patients to foster self-care and self-help and to help to shape awareness of long-Covid conditions and the implications for services and research; and if he will make a statement on the matter

- Denis Naughten

Dear Deputy Naughten,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions (PQ 5710/22), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

It is recognised that a proportion of patients will experience persistent and prolonged symptoms after acute COVID-19 infection. There are many terms used to describe this post-acute sequelae, the most commonly used terms are Post COVID-19 Condition or Long COVID. Information on the features, incidence and course of Post COVID-19 Condition/Long is still emerging. Generally, signs and symptoms develop during or following an infection consistent with COVID-19, continue for more than 4-12 weeks and are not explained by an alternative diagnosis. The condition usually presents with clusters of symptoms, often overlapping, which may change over time and can affect any system in the body.

The HSE has developed an interim Model of Care for Long COVID. This sets out how services and supports should be designed and delivered for patients who have ongoing symptoms in the Post-Acute phase of their illness and those who are experiencing Long COVID. This Model of Care aims to build on existing service provision, in addition to establishing new services across a number of health care settings including GP, community services and acute hospitals. There will be a phased implementation of this model of care with a focus on establishing, Post-Acute and Long COVID clinics as initial priority. This will involve expanding the resources at existing clinics where required and development of new clinics in line with the Model of Care. An implementation team within the HSE will be driving the implementation of these clinics.

In addition to the further expansion and development of services outlined above, the HSE also developing a comprehensive set of online resources which will be accessible through the HSE website. The purpose of these resources is to raise awareness of Long COVID as a condition and to empower patients to self-manage their symptoms. It will also provide guidance for patients regarding when they should seek additional services and supports and how to access these.

As part of the overall implementation of the Model of Care for long COVID, the HSE will be engaging with patient advocacy groups and patient representatives as key stakeholders. This process will be key to informing and guiding how the various services and supports with the MOC can be delivered.



At present, patients with persistent symptoms following COVID-19 infection may be followed up by their GP or in hospital settings as clinically appropriate. People in the community who are concerned about persistent symptoms following Covid-19 should contact their GP in the first instance, who will be able to assess and sign post them towards the service most appropriate to their needs, including on ward referral to a Post-Acute or Long COVID clinic if appropriate.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TJ Dunford', is written over a horizontal line.

TJ Dunford
Head of Operations - Primary Care
Community Operations