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Dearadh agus Nuálaíocht Chliniciúil; Oifig an Príohoifigeach Cliniciúil
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7th March, 2022

Deputy Thomas Pringle, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 10323/22

To ask the Minister for Health the actions that have been taken by his Department to achieve the recommendation to deliver a significant increase in the number of podiatrists dedicated to diabetic foot care as outlined in the HSE document entitled Model of Care for the Diabetic Foot; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Pringle,

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 Programme for Diabetes (NCP Diabetes) on your question and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

Limb loss is one of the most devastating complications of diabetes and represents an enormous burden on the individual, their families and on the health and social care system in general. In addition, diabetic foot disease accounts for a significant proportion of health service expenditure. Reducing the number of diabetes related foot ulcers and amputations remains one of the NCP Diabetes' major aims.

The first Model of Care to be published by NCP Diabetes was the *Model of Care for the Diabetic Foot 2011,* which was recently updated and launched in December 2021. In line with international best evidence it calls for an equitable standardised foot screening process, risk status to be defined and a clinical care and management plan to be recommended for each category. It calls for initial foot screening to occur in general practice, the at–risk foot to be treated in the community setting by the foot protection team and the active foot to receive care in the hospital setting by the multidisciplinary diabetic foot team.

In 2020, the Health Service Executive published The *National Framework for the Integrated Prevention and Management of Chronic Disease (2020-2025)* which adopted a whole system approach to integrated care. This coincided with a reformed GP contract which will provide reimbursement for opportunistic case finding, prevention and care for people with diabetes. This specifically incorporates a detailed foot assessment.

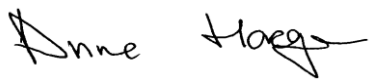
In line with these developments, new diabetes community specialist teams (CSTs) are being recruited to include nurses, dietitians and podiatrists. To support implementation of integrated diabetic foot care, 30 WTE Clinical Specialist Podiatrists, 34 WTE Senior Podiatrists and 29 Staff Grade Podiatrists

are being recruited to staff Specialist Ambulatory Care Hubs across the 9 Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs). In addition, to support integration of care and to address acute gaps in service, 3 WTE Clinical Specialist and 3 WTE Senior Podiatrists are being recruited for acute services.

Implementation of the *Model of Care for the Diabetic Foot* will empower people with diabetes and reduce foot ulcers, reduce amputations and reduce length and number of hospital admissions. National Recruitment to Diabetes community specialist teams across Ireland is underway to enable recruitment of podiatrists into these integrated care positions.

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