



Mr. Paul Reid,
Chief Executive Officer & Chair HSE National Crisis Management Team (NCMT),
Health Services Executive,
Dr Steevens' Hospital,
Dublin 8,
D08 W2A8.

5th May 2020

Via email to: ceo.office@hse.ie

Dear Paul,

Arising from today's meeting of the COVID-19 National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE), I wish to bring to your attention, as Chair of the HSE NCMT, the following decisions of the NPHE which are now required to be actioned by the HSE and Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC):

1. The NPHE agreed that the HPSC is to complete a detailed epidemiology report on the outbreaks of COVID-19 across long-term residential healthcare settings. The report will be informed by the findings of the ongoing dedicated enhanced testing programme in this sector and will inform the development of future testing strategy. The report is to be submitted to the NPHE for discussion at its meeting on 12th May 2020.
2. The NPHE agreed that its recommendation of 27th March 2020 with regard to pausing all non-essential health services (i.e. as part of the public health restrictive measures introduced on that date), in respect of acute care is now to be replaced with a recommendation that the delivery of acute care should be determined by appropriate clinical and operational decision making.
3. The HPSC is to prepare a paper regarding the potential for RNA / PCR testing for COVID-19 to form part of a strategic approach to testing and how testing capacity should be best utilised and targeted. This will be informed by the experience from the programme of enhanced testing in longterm residential healthcare settings.

The NPHE acknowledged the significant progress made by the HSE in delivering the enhanced testing programme across long-term residential healthcare settings. The NPHE looks forward to receiving the report of this programme, as per No. 1 above. This will provide important learning to guide our overall testing approach, having regard to the need over the coming months to respond to outbreaks which are likely to occur in a range of higher risk groups and situations such as: amongst vulnerable groups; healthcare workers; as well as in certain higher risk work and residential settings.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the wider team across the HSE for your ongoing support and work across the health and social care services as we move through the COVID-19 National Public Health Emergency. Officials from this Department have been and continue to be available to work with relevant HSE staff.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Holohan', written over a horizontal line.

Dr Tony Holohan
Chief Medical Officer

c.c. Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer, HSE
Mr Liam Woods, National Director, Acute Hospital Operations, HSE