



Mr. Stephen Donnelly TD,
Minister for Health,
Department of Health,
Miesian Plaza,
50-58 Lower Baggot Street,
Dublin 2.

2nd July 2020

Via email to Private Secretary to the Minister for Health

Dear Minister,

I write further to today's meeting of the COVID-19 National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET).

At today's meeting the NPHET noted the current epidemiological situation in Ireland as follows:

- I. The number of confirmed cases is 25,473, with 11 new cases notified today,
- II. 21 confirmed cases in hospital this yesterday morning,
- III. 12 confirmed cases requiring critical care this yesterday evening,
- IV. 1,736 deaths recorded to date, with 1 new death notified,
- V. 44% of all cases reported in the past fortnight were in those under 34 years of age,
- VI. 13% of cases arising in the past fortnight have been associated with travel.

In addition, at today's meeting, the NPHET observed that most of the key parameters relevant to the COVID-19 disease remain stable or are improving. In particular, the incidence of infection has been stable, the positivity rate continues to decrease, hospitalisation rates have been decreasing, ICU admission rates has been stable and the loss of life due to COVID-19 infection has been decreasing. However, NPHET noted with caution that the Influenza-Like Infection rates (ILI) are slightly increased for this time of year but remain below threshold, estimates of the effective Reproduction number indicate that it may be increasing to 1 (however the small number of cases reduces the predictive value of the Reproduction number, with wide confidence intervals) and that the proportion of cases which are travel-related continues to increase week-on-week (13% of cases notified over the past fortnight have been associated with travel).

As part of its consideration of the European and international epidemiological situation, NPHET took note of the deteriorating situation globally. In this context, NPHET considered issues relating to overseas travel, the current positive profile of the disease in Ireland and the high relative risk posed by imported cases. NPHET noted that EU Schengen countries are opening up to unimpeded travel from 15 countries outside the Schengen area and that Government, as part of a *Roadmap on Safe Overseas Access*, is drawing up a "Green List" of countries with a broadly similar or better epidemiological profile to Ireland (which can be verified as such) with which to institute reciprocal travel arrangements.

In this regard the NPHET reiterates with urgency its prior recommendations, that urgent steps should be taken to prevent, to the greatest extent possible, imported cases to Ireland. Such measures would include legal restrictions on overseas travel, as is the approach taken by all other EU Member States.

You may also wish to note that the NPHET considered a paper from the Ethical Considerations Subgroup that provided a guiding toolkit and supporting materials to facilitate good and ethical decision-making. The paper had been circulated to the necessary stakeholders, including the Board of the HSE. The NPHET agreed the following action:

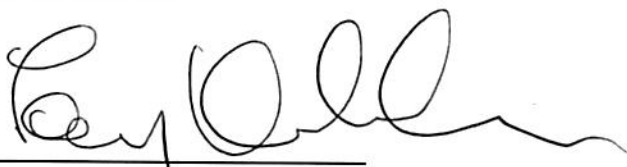
"A paper on '*Procedural Values for Decision-Making in a Pandemic*' by the Ethical Considerations Subgroup was considered and supported by the NPHET. This paper, along with a supporting suite of ethical guidance, will be published on the Department of Health's website."

The NPHET of course remains available to provide any further advice and recommendations that may be of assistance to you and Government in relation to ongoing decision-making processes in respect of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I also enclose a copy of the letter which has been forwarded to the HSE CEO arising from today's NPHET meeting.

I would be happy to discuss further, should you wish.

Yours sincerely,

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

Dr Tony Holohan
Chief Medical Officer
Chair of the COVID-19 National Public Health Emergency Team

cc. Ms Elizabeth Canavan, Department of the Taoiseach and Chair of the Senior Officials Group for COVID-19

