National Primary Care Conference

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Improving Access to Primary and Community Care

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Improving access to Primary and Community Care

Access is one of the defining **healthcare challenges** of our time.

Improving access requires us to think differently about prevention, pathways, data and partnerships.

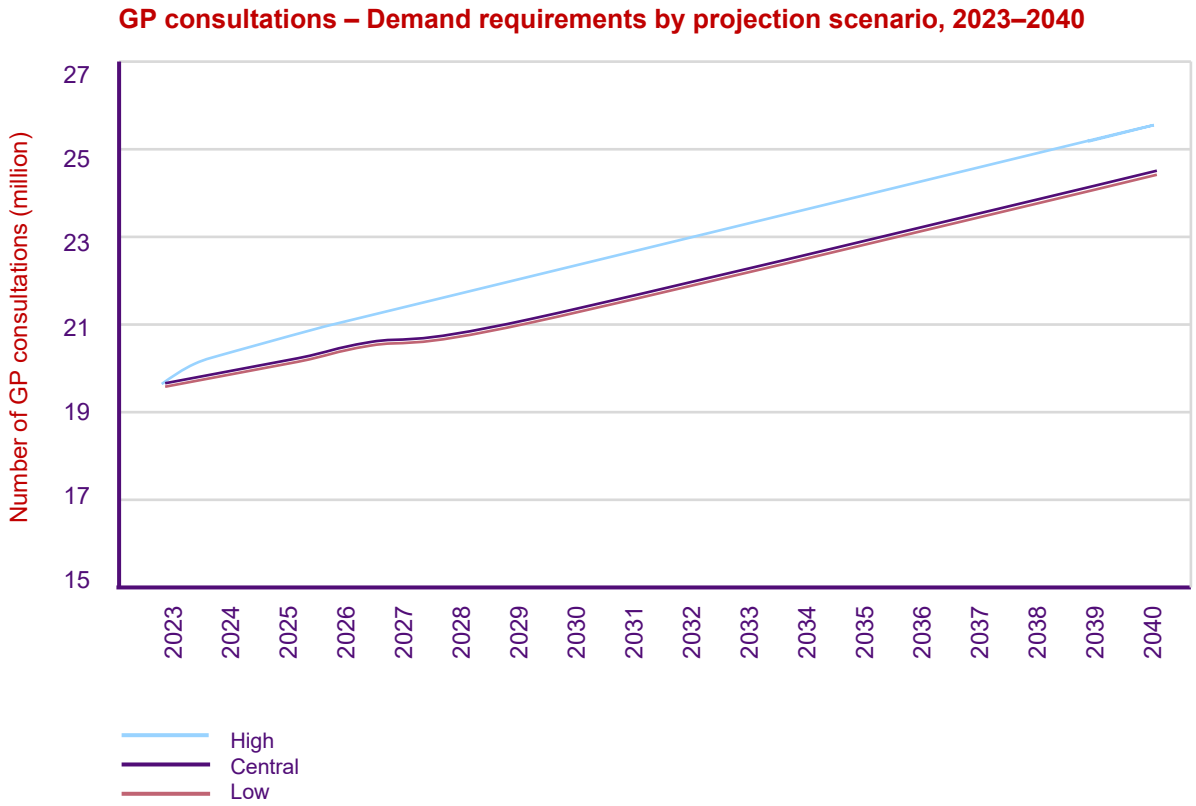


The reality we are facing

Primary Care is Under Pressure

- Rising demand
- Increasing complexity of care
- Longer waiting times
- Workforce constraints
- More care moving from hospitals into communities

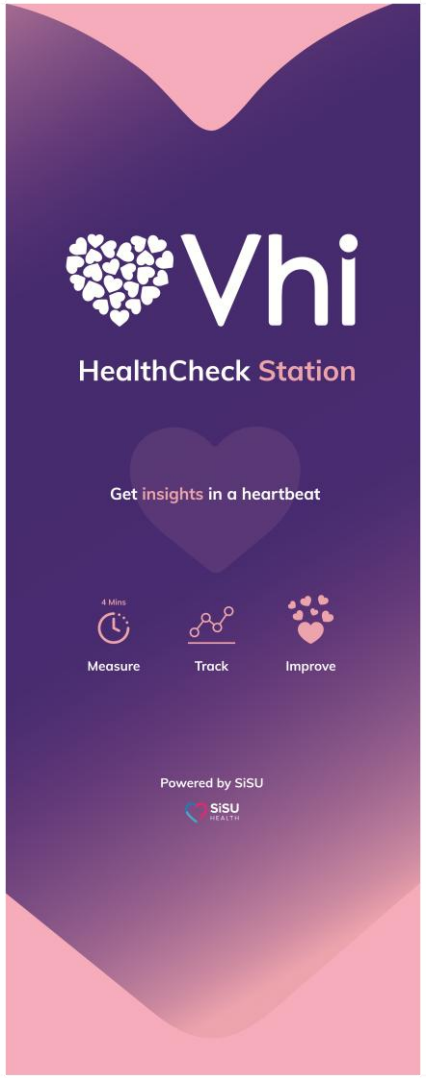
ESRI Research Series- Projections of national demand and workforce requirements for general practice in Ireland, 2023–2040.



Access starts before illness

Prevention as an Access Strategy

- Earlier identification of risk
- Health screening and health checks
- Workplace health programmes
- Digital wellness supports
- Encouraging healthier behaviours



Moving Beyond Identification

From Screening to Supported Action

The challenge

- Identifying risk is not enough

The opportunity

- Support people to make meaningful changes
- Provide digital coaching and self-management tools
- Connect members with appropriate services earlier



Creating Better Care Pathways

Access Through Integrated Care

Examples

- Musculoskeletal care
- Endoscopy pathways
- Breast cancer pathways

Key Principle

- Move patients efficiently through evidence-based pathways

Value Based Healthcare Partnerships pilots today

UPMC – Musculoskeletal (MSK)

Blackrock Health – Women's Health

St. Vincent's Private – Breast Cancer

Dermatology Network – See-and-treat

Charter / Bon Secours – Endoscopy (Mullingar)

Value-Based Healthcare

Focusing on Outcomes, Not Activity

Traditional Question: How much care did we provide?

New Question: What outcomes did patients achieve?

Benefits

- Better patient experience
- Improved outcomes
- More effective use of resources
- Improved access

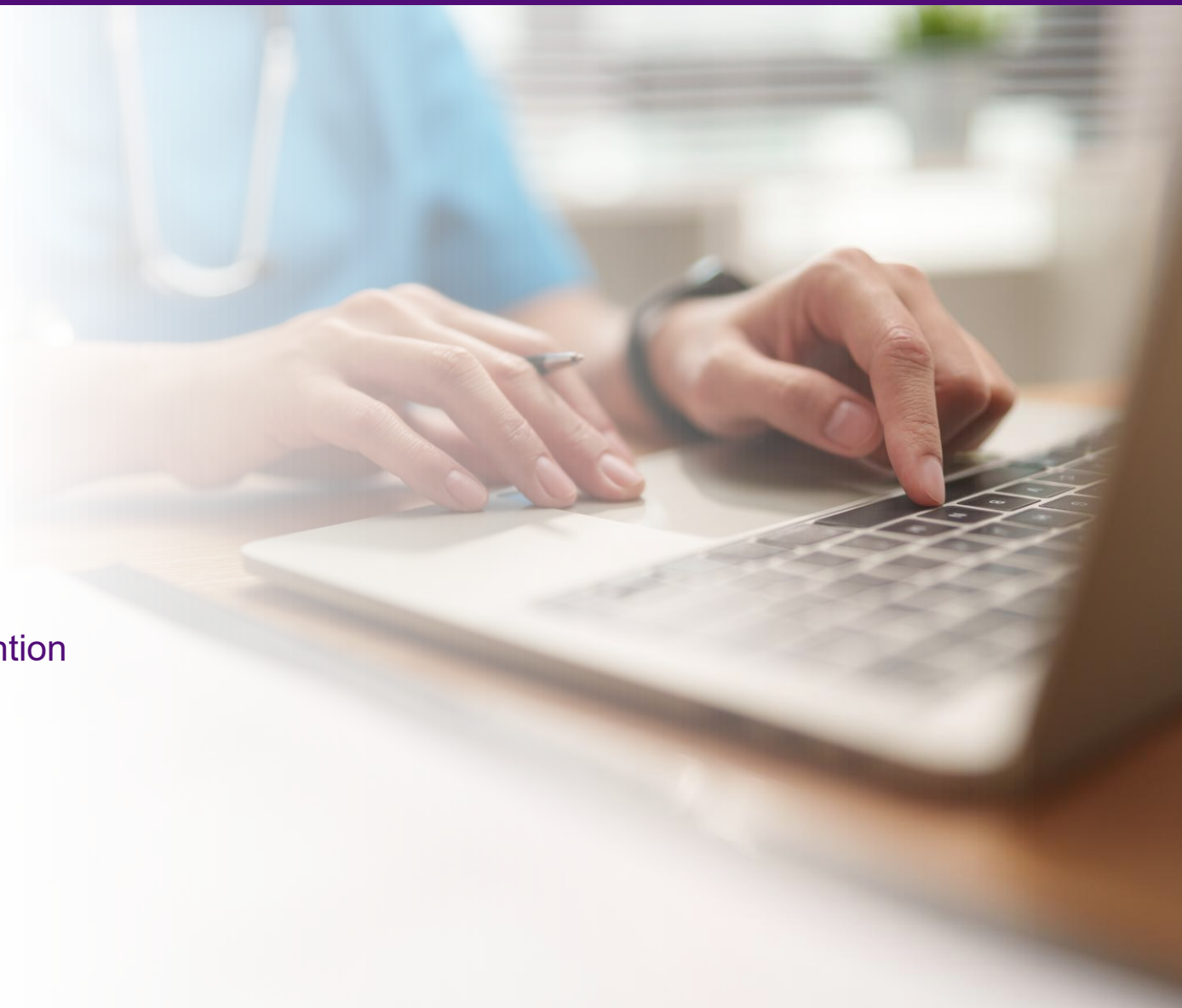


Using Data to Support Earlier Intervention

Smarter Use of Data

Data can help identify:

- People at risk of deterioration
- Frequent hospital users
- Patients who may benefit from earlier intervention
- Opportunities for proactive care



Case Study - Heart Failure Care Connect

A Practical Example

Pilot aims:

- Identify members at risk of hospital readmission
- Intervene earlier
- Support care in the community
- Improve patient experience

Outcome Sought

Keep people well and out of hospital.



Partnership is Essential

No Single Organisation Can Solve Access

Access requires collaboration between:

- Patients
- General practice
- Community services
- Hospitals
- Insurers
- Policymakers



The Central Role of General Practice

GPs Remain at the Centre

GPs are fundamental to:

- Prevention
- Early intervention
- Chronic disease management
- Coordinating care
- Supporting patients across their healthcare journey



What Success Looks Like

A Future State

Patients	Earlier support
Clinicians	Better information
Health System	Improved outcomes
Communities	Greater access



Improving Access is a Shared Responsibility

Three priorities

1. Prevent illness wherever possible
2. Intervene earlier using data and insights
3. Collaborate across the healthcare ecosystem



Improving access is not something any one organisation can deliver alone.

By **working together** and focusing on **outcomes**, we can help ensure people receive the **care they need**, when and where they need it.





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