Strengthening Primary Care: Prevention, Quality & Safety:

from Ambition to Action for a sustainable healthcare system

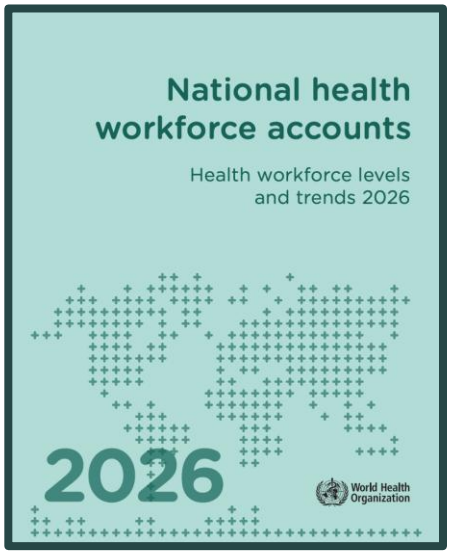
Dr Diarmuid Quinlan

GP & Medical Director, Irish College of GPs

National Primary Care Summit · 19.11.2026 · Newbridge

Strengthening primary care…WHO

"The population and health workforce are ageing…
It is not sufficient to maintain current health workforce density…
Ageing is the hidden health workforce crisis that requires urgent attention"



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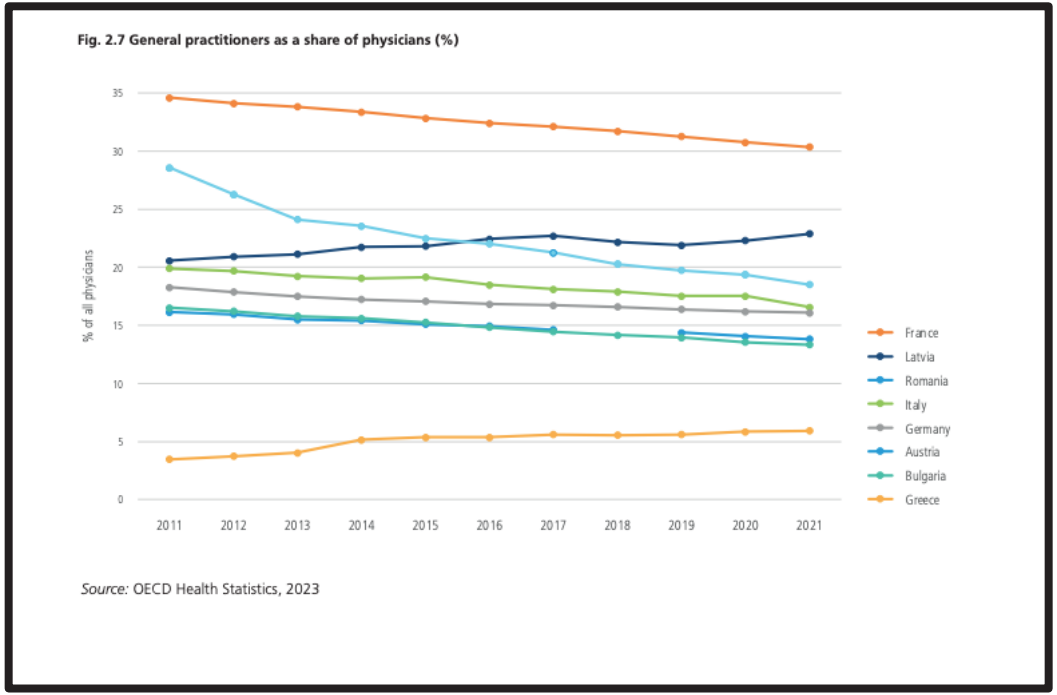
*"Europe is experiencing a multilayered, slow-burning **primary care crisis**, marked by simultaneous pressures on demand, supply & health system governance"*

"Key actions include expanded training, improved employment conditions, rural incentives, expanded multidisciplinary teams, reduced administrative workload and modernised funding"

GPs as a share of physicians



https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2023/12/assessing-health-system-performance_d6998b2c/4e6b28c0-en.pdf

Change is the only constant

Dynamic healthcare needs…

- Expanding population
- Ageing
- Multimorbidity
- Polypharmacy
- GMS expansion
- CDM



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Prevention…Vaccines 2025/26

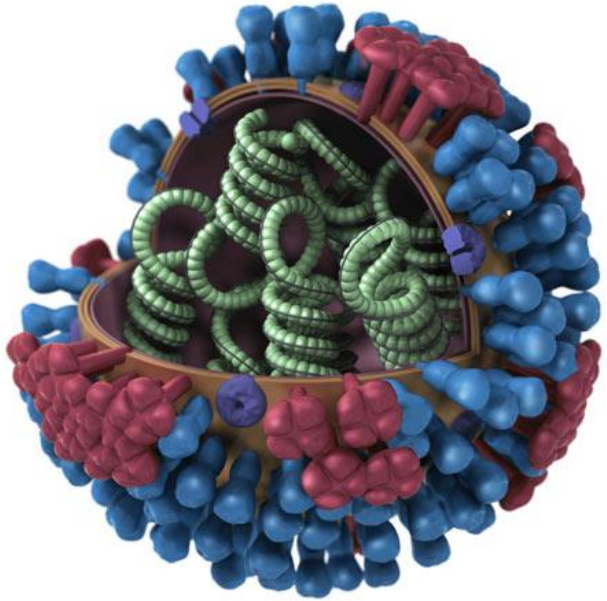
Influenza vaccine : (1m vax)[1]

- GP >580K (33% children & 69% >60y)

COVID-19 vaccine: (520K)[2]

- GP >340k (>65% total)

- Childhood vaccines…



- 1. https://file.hpsc.ie/uploads/seasonalinfluenza/immunisationuptakereport/1793109612.pdf
- 2. https://file.hpsc.ie/uploads/coronavirus/immunisationuptakereport/1793111094.pdf

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Prevention & Quality care…

- 3 strands
- 8 Chronic diseases

	2023	2024	2025
Reviews	760k	880k	900k
Cost to HSE	€78m	€92m	€94m



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Quality care: UN award for HSE CDM programme…

Documented improvement in…

- BP
- Smoking
- HbA1c
- Cholesterol
- BMI

- 30% fewer ED attendances
- 26% fewer hospital admissions
- 33% fewer GP OOH visits



Quality care: Parliamentary Question

Deputy Cormac Devlin:
"Has the Minister considered extending the CDM programme to the full population?"

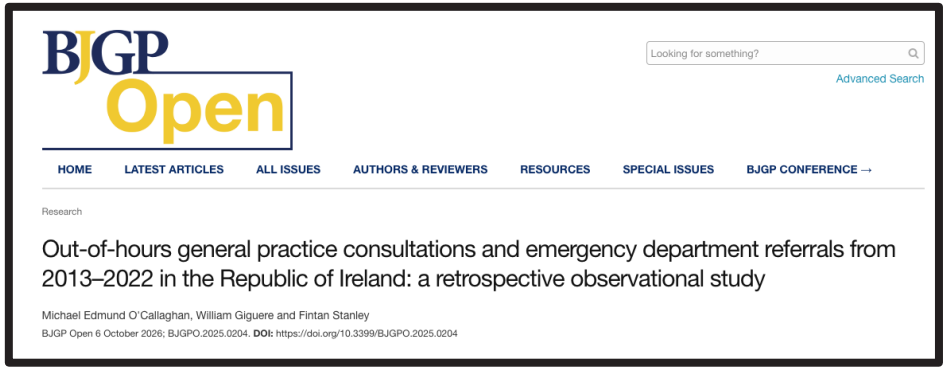
Minister JCMN:
"not currently planned to expand…to all patients on a universal basis"



Quality care…

IMG Rural GP programme

Roaccutane for acne in primary care



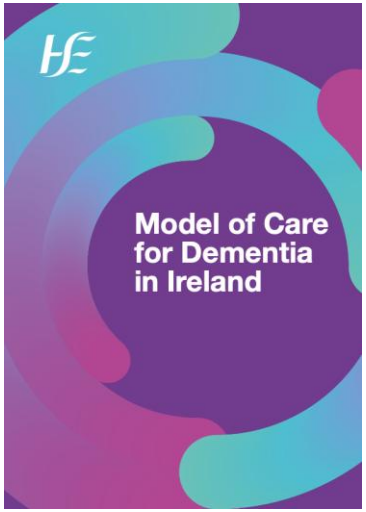
GP OOH*

*"**Conclusion:** OOH GP cooperatives provide*

1. *Substantial, adaptive capacity*
2. *Manage the vast majority (7/8) of patients within primary care*
3. *A buffer for EDs and*
4. *A pressure-release valve for daytime GP"*

* Out-of-hours general practice consultations and emergency department referrals from 2013–2022 in the Republic of Ireland: a retrospective observational study Michael Edmund O'Callaghan, William Giguere and Fintan Stanley BJGP Open 6 October 2026; BJGPO.2025.0204. **DOI:** https://doi.org/10.3399/BJGPO.2025.0204

Dementia…



2024 Lancet Commission on Dementia Prevention:

"Overall, around 45% of cases of dementia are potentially preventable by addressing 14 modifiable risk factors…during the life course"


THE LANCET

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THE LANCET COMMISSIONS · Volume 404, Issue 10452, P572-628, August 10, 2024 · Download Full Issue

Dementia prevention, intervention, and care: 2024 report of the *Lancet* standing Commission

Prof Gill Livingston, MD [a,b] · Jonathan Huntley, PhD [c] · Kathy Y Liu, MRCPsych [a] · Prof Sergi G Costafreda, PhD [a,b] · Prof Geir Selbæk, MD [d,e,f] · Prof Suvarna Alladi, PhD [g] · et al. Show more

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* https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)01296-0/abstract

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Patient safety: Medication safety

People >65y:

- 20% >10 medicines
- 5% >15 medicines

Adverse drug events

- 10% of hospital admissions
- Length of stay 11 days
- 70% are preventable



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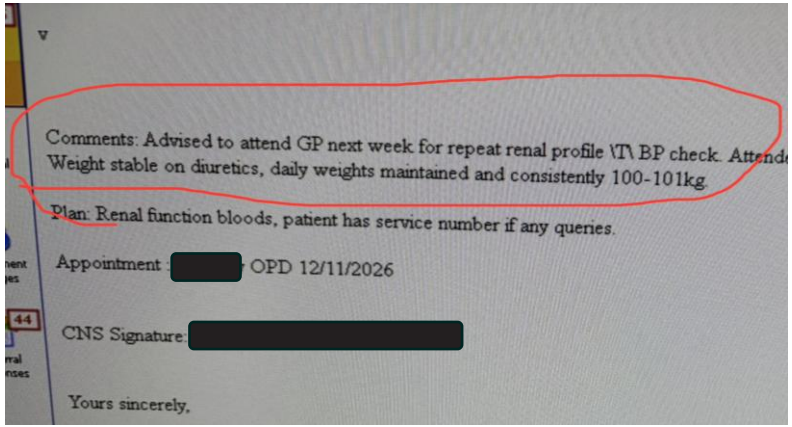
Patient safety…at interfaces of care



Comments: Advised to attend GP next week for repeat renal profile \T\ BP check. Attend
Weight stable on diuretics, daily weights maintained and consistently 100-101kg.

Plan: Renal function bloods, patient has service number if any queries.

Appointment [redacted] OPD 12/11/2026

CNS Signature: [redacted]

Yours sincerely,



THE IRISH TIMES

Courts

Hospital apologises for failings in care of woman whose death was linked to drug side effect

Dymphna Dykes (68) died from multi-organ failure due to acute liver failure associated with Isoniazid

Judge Denise Brett of the High Court said it was undoubtedly a very tragic event and she conveyed her deepest condolences to the family of Dymphna Dykes. Photograph: Bryan O'Brien

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Patient safety…at interfaces of care

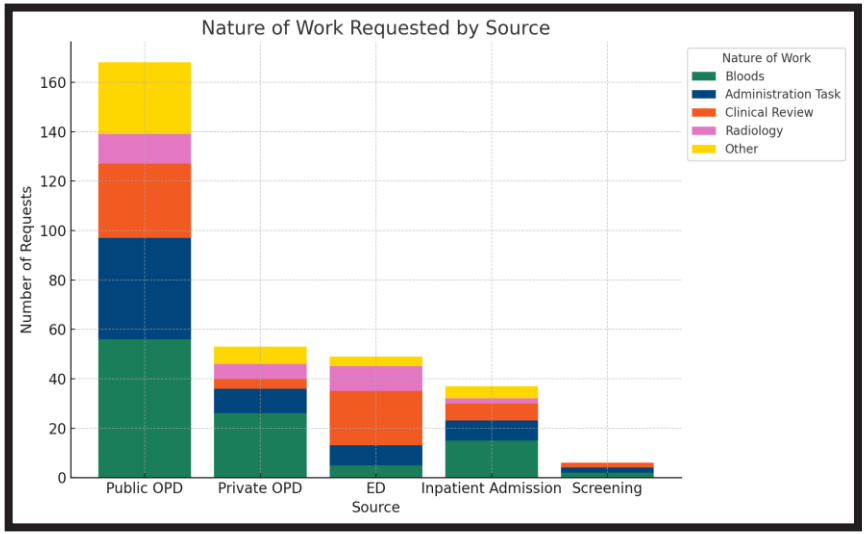
Internal Report, Irish College of GPs(June 2025)

Quantum:

- OPD (29% of 4m visits)
- ED 43% (of 1.6m visits)
- Total task shift >2m tasks

Implications

- Compromises patient safety
- Breaches MCI guidance on clinical governance
- Consumes finite GP capacity (opportunity costs)



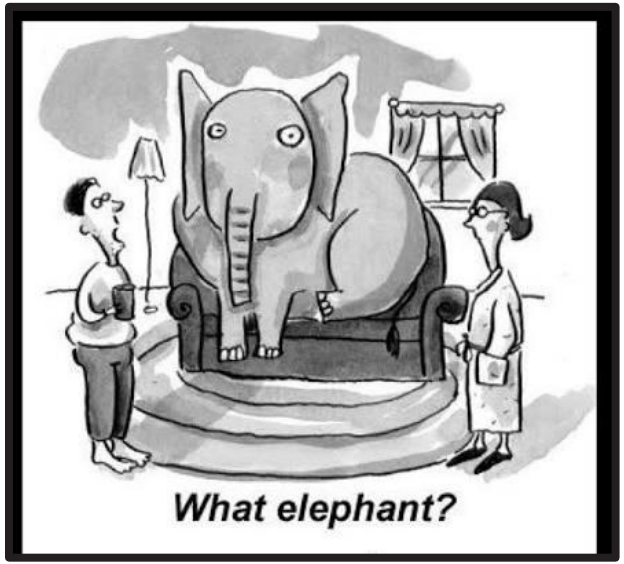
Strengthening Primary Care…
5 Strategic priorities

1. Workforce
2. Connected-integrated care
3. Quality
4. Data
5. GP career pipeline



Prevention, Quality, Safety…

Workforce and capacity
Infrastructure
Education & research
Integrated care
Accountability



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Strengthening Primary Care: Prevention, Quality & Safety:

Actions for a sustainable healthcare system

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

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