



23 March, 2011

Mr Michael McGimpsey MLA
Minister for Health Social Services and Public Safety
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast BT4 3SQ

Contribution from the Irish Government towards the development of Radiotherapy Facilities at Altnagelvin Hospital

Dear Michael

Acknowledging that the development of radiotherapy facilities at Altnagelvin Hospital provides the optimum solution to the provision of patient centred services for patients in the Donegal area, I wish to reaffirm the financial commitment given by the previous Government to the development of a satellite radiotherapy facility at Altnagelvin Hospital.

At present Donegal patients must travel to either Galway or Dublin for radiotherapy and a small number also opt to attend Belfast City Hospital, on foot of a service level agreement between that Hospital and the Health Service Executive (HSE). Donegal patients will continue to have their diagnosis, surgery and other treatment planning in either Letterkenny General Hospital or Galway University Hospital, one of the eight designated cancer centres. Chemotherapy will also be provided in either Letterkenny or Sligo General Hospital. Complex cancers, e.g. pancreatic cancer, will also be managed at designated cancer centres. In this regard the relevant expert clinicians and managers in the respective hospitals are working on the clinical pathways for patients.

The Irish Government is committed to working in partnership with you on the development of this new facility, which will become operational in 2016. It is estimated that Irish patients will comprise roughly one third of the number of patients who will attend the new centre for radiotherapy services and therefore our contribution of up to €19m equates to approximately one third of the full cost of the radiotherapy facilities.

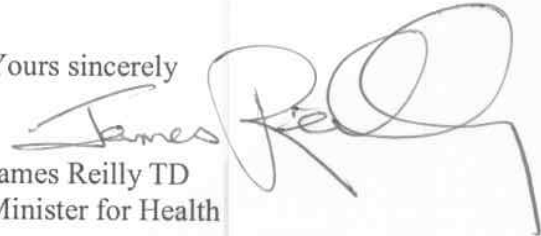
Details of the revenue implications for the HSE, following the commencement of treatment of patients are a matter for agreement between the HSE and the Commissioners in Northern Ireland. The HSE's National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) has



nominated relevant experts onto the Project's working groups and I know that progress is being made on agreeing the clinical output specifications for the project.

I look forward to our continued collaboration on this and other projects of benefit to patients in both jurisdictions and I wish you every success with this very worthwhile, patient centred initiative.

Yours sincerely


James Reilly TD
Minister for Health