

Tullamore Man Is 150,000th Patient On Treatment Fast-Track

A TULLAMORE man has become the 150,000th public patient treated under the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF), it was claimed this week.

The NTPF is a method of fast-tracking patients on public waiting lists by purchasing treatment for them in private hospitals.

The NTPF was established in 2002 and Mr John Keegan, from Tullamore had a prostate operation arranged by the fund at St Francis Hospital in Mullingar in August, 2009 after waiting five months on a public hospital waiting list.

The NTPF said the average waiting time is now 2.8 months. Overall waiting times for operations have reduced during this time from two to five years in 2002.

Mr Keegan (84), from Ballydrohid, Tullamore, had been on a waiting list for prostate surgery since March 2009.

Commenting on the announcement NTPF Chief Executive Pat O'Byrne said, 'Behind all the statistics of the Fund is a wealth of human stories. They are all public patients who had been waiting too long for operations, unable for whatever reason to access the system in a timely manner.'

'With the help of the National Treatment Purchase Fund they are now treated and at home with their families enjoying a better quality of life. In Ireland today there is no need for anyone to be waiting a long time for operations. The National Treatment Purchase Fund acts as a safety valve for public patients by getting them treated faster. Patients are treated in a private hospital as close as possible to their home,' he added.

In 2002, the NTPF helped a total of 1,920 patients. Patients from all over the country have been facilitated by the Fund at this time.

The first patient was a lady from Dublin, who had her operation in a Dublin hospital in June 2002. She had been waiting four and a half years for her operation.

Operations provided by the NTPF have covered a wide range of procedures and specialties, with ENT (26%), Orthopaedic Surgery (16%), Ophthalmology (13%) and General Surgery (10%) being the specialties in which the Fund has arranged the highest number of treatments.

During 2009 the Fund expects to arrange faster treatment for a total of 30,000 public patients.



Pictured here is the National Treatment Purchase Fund's 150,000th patient, Mr. John Keegan, from Ballydrohid, Tullamore. Mr. Keegan had his operation arranged by the Fund at St Francis Hospital in Mullingar in August 2009 after waiting five months on a public hospital waiting list. TT4448