

Ireland recruits 30,000 in COVID-19 crisis drive

March 19 2020

More than 30,000 people have answered the Irish government's call for qualified professionals and volunteers to join the healthcare workforce battling the coronavirus emergency, the health service said Thursday.

"We're looking for anyone who can offer their services and skills," Anne Marie Hoey of the Health Service Executive said of the drive launched Tuesday, adding that more than 30,000 people had responded so far.

HSE is seeking medical, nursing, ambulance and healthcare assistants as the nation braces for a sharp rise in infections.

Prime minister Leo Varadkar has said he expects there to be 15,000 cases of the coronavirus across the nation by the end of March.

"At the moment we're expanding our service rapidly in response to the emerging COVID situation—we're preparing for the surge," Hoey, head of HSE's human resources, told state broadcaster RTE.

The recruitment drive is also open to those studying to become [healthcare professionals](#), those with "other skills to offer" and unskilled volunteers capable of working if needed.

Ireland has so far reported two deaths from COVID-19.

The republic has 366 confirmed cases to date, according to department of health figures released late Wednesday.

On Tuesday, Varadkar said it was likely the [coronavirus](#) crisis would last until the summer months.

"All of our [healthcare](#) workers need us to do the right thing in the weeks ahead," he said in an address to the [nation](#).

"This is the calm before the storm—before the surge."

"And when it comes—and it will come—never will so many ask so much of so few."

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