

## **National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL) moves Covid-19 testing onto WinPath Enterprise**

***Ireland's leading medical virology laboratory works with Medical Supply Company (MSC), CliniSys, and the Health Service Executive (HSE) to deploy the modern laboratory information system at Backweston Laboratory Campus***

***The move will future-proof capacity at the dedicated SARS-CoV-2 RNA testing facility and is already improving turnaround times***

Ireland's National Virus Reference Laboratory has moved its SARS-CoV-2 RNA testing hub onto the latest version of CliniSys' laboratory information system.

The move to WinPath Enterprise will future-proof capacity and thereby reduce turnaround times at the NVRL's Satellite Laboratory Backweston (NSLB) in County Kildare.

NVRL director Dr Cillian De Gascun said: "At the start of the pandemic, we were doing about 30 PCR tests a day, and that soon increased to 1,500 a day within the NVRL, and then almost 20,000 as community testing in multiple laboratories came onstream. All of that work came on top of our normal workload, which declined - due to reduced demand from non-Covid hospital work - but never stopped completely.

"It would be hard to overstate how important the relationship with MSC, CliniSys, and the HSE was when it came to our being able to handle that volume of work. In addition, it's important to recognise the vital role the NVRL laboratory information management system (LIMS) plays in feeding data – including test results from its associated laboratories at Enfer and Backweston – to the HSE, public health teams, and the national testing programme.

"It was clear that we would not be able to maintain the quality of our service without putting Backweston onto WinPath Enterprise. So, it is great to see them go-live."

The NVRL was established at University College Dublin in 1963 at the behest of the Department of Health and is a public-sector, not-for-profit, medical virology laboratory funded by the diagnostic testing that it performs on behalf of the HSE. It is the largest such laboratory in Ireland and has played an important part in Ireland's national pandemic response.

Results from the NVRL's SARS-CoV-2 RNA testing are fed back both to the HSE, which uses them to keep the public updated on the spread of the disease, and to the public health experts running Ireland's test and trace programme.

In order to expand PCR testing capacity within the public sector, with the support of the HSE and the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine (DAFM), the NVRL established a satellite laboratory at the DAFM at Backweston Laboratory Campus in County Kildare.

As a result, since March, NSLB has done all of the NVRL's Covid-19 testing, so its main laboratory in Dublin can focus on non-Covid testing.

Brian O’Grady, NVRL systems manager, said: “As the volume of PCR testing increased, MSC and CliniSys did a lot of work on our existing LIMS to help it to cope with the pressure. They kept it up and running but it was obvious that we needed a new system.

“As soon as WinPath Enterprise was in place, we noticed that people were being notified of results quicker. In some cases, it’s only an hour, but that’s still a benefit for the people who need them.”

The NVRL has been using the WinPath LIMS for 30 years. The contract for WinPath Enterprise was signed in January 2021, with NSLB going live in the middle of July 2021.

Deirdre Burke, NVRL manager, said: “The biggest challenge was to move over from one system to another without a break in service, because we had to be able to keep feeding data into the testing system. We were running tests on one system over night and then we switched to the new system the next day.

“It all had to be done remotely, but we had a Microsoft Teams channel open all day for support, and that worked very well. Now, we want to start planning the next steps. The NVRL main lab will definitely move over to Enterprise in the coming months.”

WinPath Enterprise is designed to support laboratory networks. It offers superior integration capabilities, a better security architecture, and more up-to-date workflows than its predecessor.

As it happens, WinPath was not affected by the ransomware attack that impacted many Irish healthcare systems this summer. However, the extra security features of WinPath Enterprise were an additional factor in NVRL’s decision to move onto the new system.

Michael Lawlor, Clinical IT support manager at Medical Supply Company, said: “The new system supports networked laboratories and confirms the NVRL as Ireland’s hub for all virology testing, integration, and exchange of clinical patient data.

“With the support of the HSE, the NVRL decided to make the move to WinPath Enterprise and the timescale in which they have done that has been amazing. They really put their heart and soul into the move supported by MSC and CliniSys’ deployment team.

“Even though they were incredibly busy, we’re delighted to see that they are already reaping the benefits. Moving to WinPath Enterprise has future-proofed the testing system and improved security. It is a move that is helping in a lot of ways.”

ENDS

## **Notes for editors**

### **About Medical Supply Company**

Based in Dublin, Medical Supply Company (MSC) are an Irish owned Company celebrating 50 years in business this year, the MSC/CliniSys partnership was formed in 1990 and for more than 30 years MSC have been successfully implementing and supporting comprehensive clinical management solutions, providing local support and expertise in the Republic of Ireland with a team of highly qualified professionals.

## **About CliniSys Group**

CliniSys Group is the largest laboratory diagnostic IT vendor in Europe, with leading country market shares and an innovative and wide-reaching suite of end-to-end diagnostic solutions.

Headquartered in England, with local offices in six European countries, it has for more than 40 years been at the forefront of diagnostics workflow, order communications and information management solutions supporting radiology, cardiology and all pathology disciplines including anatomical or cellular, molecular and genetics.

These encompass the complete workflow from order, clinical decision support, collection, processing, analysis, results and reporting, through integration into the clinical workflow. CliniSys Group has built an unrivalled reputation for the deployment of complex diagnostics networks and academic centres – and is the only vendor repeatably delivering across all disciplines end to end – at scale.