

CC/MQ/MD

Email: pgmidwestacute@hse.ie

30th May 2019

Mr Maurice Quinlivan TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Re: PQ 20845/19: To ask the Minister for Health the action he has taken to address the overcrowding situation in University Hospital Limerick further to correspondence he received from seven County Limerick and mid-west TDs; and if he will make a statement on the matter – Maurice Quinlivan

Dear Deputy Quinlivan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

I refer you to PQ 17667/19, addressed to you on April 30th last and which provides some context on the significant demands on UHL and the various measures taken to address overcrowding in ED.

I can bring to your attention a more recent initiative, which is the Clinical Recovery and Support Unit established at Nenagh Hospital. This enables patients from across the Group who require ongoing rehabilitation to access supports from health and social care professionals (physiotherapists, occupational therapists etc).

This initiative has identified people who have been inpatients for longer than 30 days; who no longer need to be in the model 4 hospital in UHL; but who do have ongoing care needs. These may be complex discharges with underlying medical (e.g. ongoing requirement for IV antibiotics; recovering from amputation etc), rehabilitation or social issues. The service comes under the clinical governance of a consultant physician and is supported through the recruitment of additional therapists (physio, OT, SLT etc) to help this complex group of less acutely unwell patients in their rehabilitation and recovery as they continue their journey. The opening of the CRSU will improve patient flow within the Group and make a contribution towards alleviating overcrowding in UHL.

Pending the opening of additional bed capacity at UHL, we will continue to seek new opportunities to improve patient flow, develop alternative patient pathways and maximize efficiencies with our existing bed stock.



As you are aware, UHL/HSE MidWest Community Healthcare was one of nine focus sites which received additional funding under the Winter Plan 2018/2019. The Minister for Health has recently announced that a review of the winter plan and the nine focus sites will begin with Limerick and the MidWest. I am advised that this independent expert review will examine clinical, analytical and management performance in all nine focus areas.

As you are aware from previous PQ replies, UL Hospitals Group performs well on a number of key performance indicators relating to length of stay for medical and surgical patients; medical and surgical readmission rates; day of surgery admission etc. We are very much open to any review process that will help us identify further efficiencies and support us in meeting the increasing demand on UHL in the interests of the patients using it.

As CEO, it was with some concern that I read, initially in the media, details of the seven TDs' letter to the Minister on April 18th last. Of particular concern were comparisons between UHL and mid-Staffordshire. This is a serious claim which requires serious examination. The letter to which you are a signatory cites the comparison as being the view of the INMO. One month ago, the Chief Director of Nursing and Midwifery, UL Hospitals Group, wrote to the INMO seeking specific detail to support their assertions. We await a response. In the interests of staff morale and maintaining public confidence in our services, any of the seven public representatives who signed the letter are welcome to elucidate their concerns directly to me. It is important that they do so.

In the meantime, and in the absence of any specific information supporting the claims, I have assigned a senior manager to review the recommendations from the mid Staffordshire report and assess each of them against UHL.

I trust this clarifies the position. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



Colette Cowan
Chief Executive Officer
UL Hospitals Group