



10th December 2019

Deputy Bernard J. Durkan,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 49150/19 - To ask the Minister for Health the extent to which he expects the provision of primary care centres nationwide to alleviate the congestion at general hospitals; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

-Bernard J. Durkan

Dear Deputy Durkan,

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

Primary Care Services deliver care to service users close to home through a community-based approach. A wide range of core services are provided by GPs, Nursing and Health & Social Care Professionals, working with wider community services (older people, disability, mental health, palliative) and acute hospital services in response to service user needs. Expanding Community and Primary Care is at the heart of the Sláintecare vision.

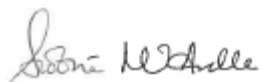
The development of Primary Care Centres (PCC) will support the implementation of new models of care and the delivery of services in high quality, modern, well equipped facilities. People are living longer, with a greater prevalence of chronic conditions. Many of these conditions require preventative care and ongoing management, services that are generally provided closer to home, in the community. International evidence shows that integrated chronic disease management systems result in 20% – 30% reduction in hospital admissions.

In parallel with the development of Primary Care infrastructure, there has been funding provided to recruit additional nursing and health and social care professionals to work in primary care. In addition to core services in the PCC, services such as radiology (x-ray and ultrasound) are available in Tuam, Castlebar, Arklow, and Athlone, which facilitate the local population and avoid the need to travel to an acute hospital which may be at a greater distance to the patient. GP Out of Hours services are accommodated in some centres.

The vision set out in Sláintecare is of a much more comprehensive Community and Primary Care system. As the Sláintecare strategy is implemented, patients will be referred from Primary Care only when their needs are sufficiently complex. The PCC is a resource in the community which will facilitate this.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,



Siobhán McArdle,
Head of Operations Primary Care,
Community Operations