

CC/JOS /MMcM

Email: pgmidwestacute@hse.ie

29th October 2019

Ms Jan O'Sullivan TD
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 43443/19

***To ask the Minister for Health the status of plans to provide a second MRI scanner for University Hospital Limerick which would alleviate some of the overcrowding in the emergency department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Jan O'Sullivan**

Dear Deputy O'Sullivan

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.

UL Hospitals Group has one MRI Scanner, which was installed in 2003. The capital costs were funded by philanthropic donations, as was an upgrade in 2009. The staffing costs are met by the HSE. The current MRI is old, but is working reliably.

The indications for an MRI scan have greatly increased over the last 15 years and the capacity on this one machine is not adequate for the demand in UHL. We currently have on average 40 patients waiting for an inpatient MRI scan each day. Many of these patients are admitted with acute neurological issues and cannot be discharged before an MRI is done. We estimate that 4-8 patients everyday are being delayed in discharge due to the wait for an MRI scan. Furthermore patients are admitted due to the fact that the outpatient wait for an MRI is so long that the only viable way to get an MRI done is by admission. This means that the lack of MRI availability is increasing admissions and delaying discharges.

Based on this data, the number one diagnostic issue for UL Hospitals Group with regard to admission and discharge is MRI availability. An additional MRI scanner would have an immediate benefit in faster discharge of patients and reducing admissions.

UL Hospitals Group has made a number of submissions nationally for replacement of the existing MRI scanner and for the funding of a second MRI machine. We have made a proposal for a mobile MRI to be placed in UHL while we await a funding decision about a second unit. This proposal forms a key element of our winter planning for this season



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I trust this clarifies the position, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,

Colette Cowan
Chief Executive Officer
UL Hospitals Group