

CC/MMcN/MMcM

Email: pgmidwestacute@hse.ie

10th December 2020

Mr Michael McNamara TD
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 39669/20

*** To ask the Minister for Health the steps that have been taken to provide additional services at the Ennis Hospital, County Clare in view of confirmation received from the HSE that a business case which was submitted for further expansion of the level of services provided at the hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Michael McNamara**

Dear Deputy McNamara,

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 can confirm that a business case submitted to the National Treatment Purchase Fund in November 2020 set out the case for a further expansion of service at the Medical Assessment Unit in Ennis Hospital. This proposal has been approved and will result in an additional 48 MAU slots per week once all the necessary staff have been recruited.

The MAU service in Ennis is well-established and continues to be supported by our GP community in County Clare and further afield. There was an increase in referrals last year of 4%. Patient feedback on the MAU is service is very positive.

MAUs provide assessment, diagnosis and treatment for patients referred with medical conditions including chest infections, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), pneumonia, urinary tract infections, fainting episodes, clots in the leg, anaemia or non-acute cardiac problems. Approximately 10% of cases may require admission to hospital and the majority will be discharged with a follow-up review in the unit within 48 hours.

Ennis has, since 2016, had the only MAU in UL Hospitals Group that is open on a seven-day basis. Its hours of operations during weekdays are also longer than in either Nenagh or St John's.

In February 2020, the MAU service in Ennis was expanded from 100 to 156 patient slots per week.

The approved NTPF funding, subject to recruiting the additional staff, will allow us to further expand our MAU service in Ennis by an additional 48 slots per week. This is being done on a phased basis and commenced on Monday, December 7th. We are starting with an additional four slots per day.

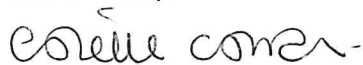


To support this expansion we are recruiting the additional nursing (2.0 WTE), medical (1.0 WTE senior registrar), allied health (1.0 WTE radiographer, 0.5 WTE physiotherapist), medical scientist (1.0 WTE) and clerical support (0.5 WTE) staff.

The effect of the above changes means the service in Ennis will have effectively doubled in the space of a year. The MAU team and Ennis Hospital will continue to work closely with their GP colleagues in County Clare and throughout the region, who regard the model of care as particularly suitable for elderly people and patients suffering from chronic conditions, who will be seen and treated more quickly than they would in a busy ED such as in UHL.

I trust this clarifies the position, please contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



Colette Cowan
Chief Executive Officer
UL Hospitals Group