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18 January 2021

Deputy Martin Browne, TD
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Browne,

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

PQ 44181/20

To ask the Minister for Health his views on the importance of persons receiving convalescent or palliative care to remain close to their families; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

The aim of palliative care is to provide care at home or as close to home as possible. Specialist palliative care services are available in 38 acute hospitals and in 13 hospices, and Community Teams provide care to patients at home in every county.

A new hospice opened in Wicklow in December 2020. It is planned to open a new unit in Mayo early this year, and a further unit in Waterford to service the people of the Southeast will open before the summer. Plans are on-going to develop new hospices in Louth, Cavan and Offaly.

Over 100 Palliative Care Support Beds are also available in nursing homes/community units across the country.

With respect to convalescence care, it is always the aim to provide this as close as possible to the patient's family and home address. Convalescence care is normally provided for a period of 4 weeks. However, it is important to ensure that patients move from acute hospitals as soon as they are well to do so, particularly in the current environment when there is additional pressure on the hospital system. Hospitals will always do their best to have patients cared for close to their homes but need to access convalescence beds where they are available.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra Tuohy".

Sandra Tuohy,
Assistant National Director - Community Operations,
Services for Older People.