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17th June 2020

Deputy Jennifer Whitmore,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 9432/20 - To ask the Minister for Health the current primary care transport service schedule for County Wicklow residents travelling to Dublin city hospitals, that is, transport services provided by the HSE in County Wicklow including access to day hospitals and day centres and access to outpatient departments and other hospital services in counties Wicklow and Dublin; when the transport timetable was reduced in previous years; the reason for the reduction in this transport service; his plans to increase the frequency of the transport service during Covid-19 to facilitate patients that may have appointments in the afternoon and do not have access to alternative modes of transport; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 11372/20 - To ask the Minister for Health the way in which persons living in County Wicklow that have hospital appointments after 1pm, at which time the hospital travel scheme ends, are expected to travel with limited public transport available and family assistance might not be available also; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

-Jennifer Whitmore

Dear Deputy Whitmore,

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.

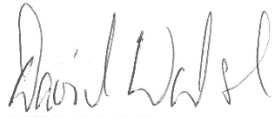
There is no statutory requirement for the Health Service Executive (HSE) to provide patient transport services. It is expected that patients should be in a position to make their own arrangements for journeys by using Public Transport or Local Link transport in rural areas or relying on family. In terms of assistance with transport costs, limited patient transport services are provided on a discretionary basis for journeys between HSE or HSE funded healthcare facilities for the purposes of receiving on going non-emergency, non-urgent, planned, medical care.

Primary Care in Wicklow provides a limited transport service for morning appointments only. This service leaves Arklow at 6.30am, collecting clients in the surrounding areas for appointments in various hospitals in Dublin. The return service leaves Dublin at 1pm. This service has always been a morning only service.

The provision of patient transport is through a designated taxi service for individuals. This is a planned service however this service is not a timetabled transport option. Currently, in order to remain with budget, in line with the Health Service Executive's 2020 Service Plan, this service has been significantly reduced. All patient transport applications are individually reviewed. An application for patient transport may be submitted through the applicant's health care professional.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Walsh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

David Walsh,
National Director,
Community Operations