



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Social Care Department
Office of Older People Services
Lacken
Dublin Road
Kilkenny

Telephone 353 56 7784140

11th November 2020

Mr. Mattie McGrath T.D.
Dail Eireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 32725/20

To ask the Minister for Health the number of palliative care patients that required access to a palliative care bed in south County Tipperary since March 2020; the number of palliative care patients that were refused a bed in a palliative care facility in County Tipperary since March 2020 due to the of lack of beds; the number of patients that required convalescent care in south County Tipperary since March 2020; the number of patients that have been refused convalescent care due to the closure of St. Brigid's Hospital; the number of patients that have been refused respite due to the closure of St. Brigid's Hospital since March 2020; the breakdown of all patients who would normally use the St. Brigid's Hospital facility for respite care that have been accommodated since March 2020; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy McGrath,

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

I have reviewed that matter and the following reply is the current position.

In the current Covid-19 pandemic public health emergency, in March 2020 St. Brigid's Hospital was designated as a Covid-19 step down facility to support patient flow from the acute hospitals in the region. As the demand for Covid-19 step down beds was not required to the level as predicted during the initial Covid-19 pandemic, SECH utilised the staffing resource from St. Brigid's to meet competing demands and priorities in the South Tipperary area. These arrangements have been kept under review - there remains a critical requirement for staff elsewhere in community healthcare services at this time. South East Community Healthcare appreciates the commitment of the excellent team of staff associated with St. Brigid's in taking up redeployment in Covid-19 related roles in community healthcare services.

Arrangements are in place for patients requiring residential convalescent, emergency respite and palliative care to be accommodated elsewhere in the HSE's community healthcare services in the South Tipperary area.

With regard to palliative care, South Tipperary currently has palliative care beds in 2 locations i.e. Cluain Arann Tipperary Town and St. Theresa's Hospital Clogheen. These beds are available to all individuals who reside within the South Tipperary catchment area, including those living in Carrick-on-Suir and its surrounding environs. At the time of writing I can advise that there are no patients awaiting admission for palliative care and I am unaware of any individual who was refused a palliative bed since March 2020 as individuals continue to be accommodated in both Cluain Arann and St. Theresa's Clogheen. In addition it

should be noted that throughout the initial phase of Covid-19 pandemic, some patients and their families chose to remain at home for their palliative care. In such instances the HSE worked to provide home supports as appropriate.

Convalescent care requirements can vary at any one time and these are monitored closely by community services/services for older people in association with our colleagues in the acute hospital services. Convalescent care beds are available in both Cluain Arann and St. Theresa's Hospital Clogheen. At times both units can reach full occupancy; however, there is ongoing and regular bed availability in both these units. Through transitional care funding in acute hospitals, South Tipperary General Hospital also regularly discharges individuals to private nursing homes. I am unaware of any individual who has been refused convalescent care in South Tipperary since March 2020.

In line with national guidance, all HSE respite beds were closed due to Covid-19 restrictions including the South Tipperary area until August 2020 when the phased re-opening commenced. In addition emergency respite can also be provided in private nursing homes via transitional care funding.

I trust this clarifies. Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Murphy".

Barbara Murphy
Head of Services for Older People
South East Community Healthcare