



**Cúram Sláinte
Pobail Thoir**

ag freastal ar Bhaile Átha Cliath
Thoir Theas, Baile Átha Cliath
Theas agus Cill Mhantáin

**Community
Healthcare East**

serving Dublin South East,
Dublin South and Wicklow

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4th December 2020

Deputy Jennifer Carroll MacNeill, TD
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Kildare Street
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Head of Service Primary Care
HSE Community Healthcare East,
Block B, Civic Centre,
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Re: PQ ref 37506/20

***To ask the Minister for Health his plans to reopen Gay Men's Health Service as a priority; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy MacNeill,

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 and Children for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to an unprecedented interruption to normal healthcare activity, with all services affected including the GMHS.

In March 2020, the GMHS STI service was closed due to Covid-19 and staff members were redeployed to Covid-19 testing, however two staff members continued to facilitate PrEP patients as a temporary measure, with extended prescriptions and referral to St. James's Hospital for HIV testing.

In August, the GMHS staff working on preparations to enable service resumption in line with Phase 2 of the HSE's "A Safe Return to Health Services, Restoring health and social care services in a COVID environment". This included extensive work with the OoCIO to establish an electronic patient record and appointment system to support safe service provision.

In September, following a surge in demand for Covid-19 testing, staff from the GMHS were redeployed back to Covid-19 testing services. Work will recommence in the coming weeks to complete the ICT systems required in GMHS to ensure a safe return to service provision for both patients and staff. In addition, the National Recruitment Service (NRS) are currently engaged in a recruitment campaign for permanent staff for the GMHS. The GMHS will aim to reopen services in January 2021.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Maeve Roesicle

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Emma Smyth

Head of Service, Primary Care