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November 3rd 2020

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Holly Cairns, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 31459/20

"To ask the Minister for Health his plans to reopen a South Doc service in Kinsale, County Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter."

Dear Deputy Cairns,

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.

South West Doctors on Call Limited is an Out of Hours Family Doctor service for urgent medical care in Counties Cork and Kerry with its administrative headquarters and call centre in Killarney. It has a membership of over 500 GPs and a network of 26 treatment centres of which eight are overnight and supported by a fleet of 21 vehicles which are fully equipped for home visit situations.

Following a review of service provision across Cork and Kerry in 2013 changes were made to service delivery in a number of areas, one of which was Kinsale and SouthDoc established the main centre for the area in Bandon. The area is supported by two Doctors and one overnight. One doctor is located at the Bandon Treatment Centre, while the second doctor is mobile for home visits including the Kinsale area.

When a patient makes contact with SouthDoc, an electronic medical record is created which documents the patient's details, clinical category and progression through the service. In relation to those patients calling from Kinsale, the medical records are sent to the Bandon Treatment Centre as the central hub for that area. The allocation of records to the Bandon Treatment Centre maximises safety and ensures the integrity of the transfer process. The Doctors on duty reviews the records with a view to the appropriate treatment type of each patient based on the individual's clinical condition, which may be a telephone/video consultation, in the home or in a treatment centre. All patient consultations are by appointment.

SouthDoc continues to deliver the service in response to the patient needs in a manner which assures safety, ease and equity of access and does not have any plans to alter the service in any way that would diminish this ethos. All patients are dealt with in accordance with their clinical needs.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Teresa O' Donovan
Head of Service - Primary Care,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare