



29th September 2020

Deputy Alan Dillon,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 23850/20 - To ask the Minister for Health the way in which he plans extending the opening hours for primary health centres to elevate demand for acute accident and emergency hospital settings and address the trolley crisis; and if he will make a statement on the matter

-Alan Dillon

Dear Deputy Dillon,

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. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The Winter Planning process of the HSE is due for publication imminently and contains a wide range of measures to manage the challenges of delivering health services in a Covid environment where social distancing and infection control measures will reduce capacity of the health services. Protecting and caring for the most vulnerable people in our society is a key priority of our plans and actions. Of equal importance is the need to ensure that we focus on the health and wellbeing of all of our staff whom have experienced unprecedented challenges in the nature of the work we undertake on behalf of the public we serve.

The Winter Plan contains a range of measures including *inter alia*:

- Additional acute bed capacity;
- Additional home support packages;
- Additional HSE procured private bed capacity;
- Additional intermediate care beds, proposals for acute hospital egress; and
- Additional Community Healthcare Networks, Community Specialist Teams (Older Persons and Chronic Disease).

The extended opening hours for Primary Care centres was not viewed as being critical in reducing demand on emergency departments but there are a range of measures to enhance GP capacity which will assist in reducing presentations at emergency departments.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Siobhán McArdle', written in a cursive style.

Pp

Siobhán McArdle,
Head of Operations Primary Care,
Community Operations