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Christopher O'Sullivan, T.D.,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 24844/20**

**"To ask the Minister for Health the reason for the closure of the Cara Lodge drug rehabilitation centre in west County Cork; and if he will put in place a strategy for the reopening of same"**

Dear Deputy O'Sullivan,

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.

The need and the demand for residential adolescent addiction services in the region has reduced, and it is now necessary to realign services so that we can meet the needs of as many young people as possible. In line with the National Substance Misuse Strategy, the focus of HSE/Cork Kerry Community Healthcare funding for Matt Talbot Adolescent Services will move from residential services to day services. This will help young people to remain in their own homes and communities while taking part in addiction services.

There has been a significant reduction in referrals from the HSE/Cork Kerry Community Healthcare to Matt Talbot Adolescent Services residential services at both Aiséirí Aislínn and Cara Lodge in the last five years. Referrals from CKCH to both facilities decreased by over 50% between 2015 and 2019. Any reduction in the referrals of children to residential services is to be welcomed, as from a clinical point of view removing a young person from their home environment for treatment is the least preferable option and should always be seen as a last resort.

This means that Cara Lodge residential service operated by MTAS is no longer required, and will no longer be funded. Funding will be moved from residential services to day services and the Cara Lodge service will close.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare acknowledges the significant contribution of Matt Talbot Adolescent Services and in particular the management and staff team at Cara Lodge Residential Treatment in providing of high quality residential treatment and rehabilitation services to adolescents and family support, through the family programme. Cork Kerry Community Healthcare recognises the expertise of MTAS and is committed to both working with the organisation and funding the provision of non-residential services. The partnership and collaboration between HSE Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Services, including MTAS non-residential services, can be the cornerstone of responding to the particular challenges we face in the coming years for adolescents and their families

in the region. The enhancement of Tier 2 & 3 services in the region, using the case management framework, will provide critical services for greater numbers of individuals and families.

(Tier 2 interventions are delivered through outreach, primary care settings as well as by specialist drug treatment services, which are community based. The interventions include information and advice, triage, referral to structured drug treatment, brief interventions and harm reduction  
Tier 3 interventions are mainly delivered in specialised structured community addiction services, but can also be sited in primary care settings. Typically, the interventions consist of community based specialised drug assessment and co-ordinated, care-planned treatment which includes psychotherapeutic interventions and day services.)

This re-organisation of services will provide easier access to services to hundreds of additional children, young adults and families and provide services to them in areas of Cork and Kerry where there was little or no service available previously.

The National Substance Misuse Strategy "Reducing Harm Supporting Recovery" highlighted the need to expand services for people under 18 years of age who are experiencing problems as a result of using substances. The strategy states that most young people can and should be treated in their own community. The Aiséirí Aislínn, Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny Service is the National Residential Detox and Rehabilitation Service for adolescents and young adults and provides a specialist multidisciplinary service. CKCH Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Service refer occasionally to this service. The HSE's National Clinical and Operational Lead is assured that the Aiséirí Aislínn service has the capacity to provide for residential services for the entire country.

The HSE have confirmed that the funding which currently supports delivery of the MTAS residential service will remain with CKCH Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Services to develop the Tier 2 and 3 services in the area (including Matt Talbot Trabeg Lawn services).

The HSE and MTAS are committed to working together to develop a transition plan which will protect the clients and support the staff throughout this process.

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

Yours sincerely,



**Rebecca Loughry**  
**Specialist Social Inclusion**  
**Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**