



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

23rd December 2021

Deputy Danny Healy- Rae,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2.

Rannan na nOspideil Ghearmhíochaine
Aonad 4A – Áras Dargan
An Ceantar Theas
An Bothar Mileata
Cill Mhaighneann
BÁC 8

Acute Operations
Health Service
Executive
Unit 4A - The Dargan
Building
Heuston South
Quarter

PQ Number: 61128/21. To ask the Minister for Health if he will address a matter (details supplied) regarding hospital visits; and if he will make a statement on the matter. I am very concerned about access being denied to elderly patients in our hospitals as I believe visitors are only being let in when it is clear that the patient is dying. I am asking that family members be allowed to visit their loved ones at least twice a week and even if they have to wear proper PPE when visiting- Danny Healy- Rae

Dear Deputy Healy- Rae,

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

Response:

Since the onset of the Covid- 19 Pandemic, clinical guidance has been provided and updated on a frequent basis to support the safe operation of acute hospital services and facilitate access to patients by people who are important to them. The current HSE AMRIC guidance makes provision that all patients in inpatient areas of a hospital should be allowed to nominate one support person and access for that support person should be as flexible as possible.

The current HSE AMRIC guidance is available via the following link:
<https://www.hpsc.ie/az/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/guidanceforhealthcareworkers/acutehospitalguidance/Guidance%20on%20Access%20to%20Acute%20Hospitals%20for%20Nominated%20Support%20Partners.pdf>

The HSE AMRIC guidance also provides clinical guidance for visitor access to be accommodated in accordance with local hospital policy. However it must be highlighted that visitor access may be limited in circumstances where there is a significant number of Covid-19 cases within the hospital, Covid-19 outbreak(s) and/or high Covid-19 incidence within the community. It is acknowledged that access is particularly challenging when multi-bed rooms represent the majority of the acute bed capacity and when rooms or waiting areas are small or poorly ventilated.

Hospitals have confirmed that access is provided on compassionate grounds and every effort is made to facilitate maximum access to their inpatients. This access is balanced in tandem with the requirement to provide safe services to the patients and staff working in the hospital as per the current clinical guidance.

Clinical guidance is kept under constant review and upgraded in the context of the trajectory of the ongoing Pandemic.

I trust that this is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Rudolph". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

**General Manager
HSE Acute Operations**