

CC/MMcN/MC

Email: [pgmidwestacute@hse.ie](mailto:pgmidwestacute@hse.ie)

29th March 2021

Mr Michael McNamara TD  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 11070/21

**\* To ask the Minister for Health the status of the recruitment of new staff and the expansion of the medical assessment unit at Ennis Hospital; the details of any expansion of services; if consideration will be given by his Department and the HSE for a further expansion of services provided at the facility; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Michael McNamara**

Dear Deputy McNamara,

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.

As set out in my previous response of December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, we were delighted to receive a funding allocation from the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) to support the provision of additional slots in the Medical Assessment Unit at Ennis Hospital. Our business case set out that an additional 48 slots per week could be provided on a phased basis subject to the recruitment of staff across various disciplines. This follows the earlier expansion of the service at Ennis in February 2020 from 100 to 156 slots per week. With the support of the NTPF, this is now increasing by a further 48 slots per week.

The first phase of this latest expansion was effected in December 2020 with four additional slots per day Monday to Friday. Some additional staffing – 1.0 NCHD (non-consultant hospital doctor) and 0.5 WTE clerical support – are already in post. Additional resources in nursing, allied health and general support staff are also at various stages of an ongoing recruitment process. Once these personnel are in place we will increase the number of weekly slots in the MAU by a further 28 slots per week in line with the allocation from the NTPF.

The MAU at Ennis Hospital provides diagnosis and treatment for patients referred with medical conditions including chest infections, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), pneumonia, urinary tract infections, fainting episodes, clots in the leg, anaemia or non-acute cardiac problems.

GPs—or the ED— initially assess and refer patients for appointment on the same day or the following day. The multidisciplinary team at Ennis MAU led by consultant physician Dr Tom Peirce, works towards same-day diagnosis, treatment and discharge, and sees all patients within an hour of arrival.

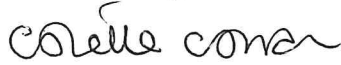
The Medical Assessment Unit at Ennis Hospital has run as a seven-day service (8am-8pm Monday to Friday, and 10am-6pm Saturday and Sunday) since 2016 and is the only such unit within UL Hospitals Group to operate on a



seven-day basis. This is in part due to the excellent relationships that have been developed between the staff in Ennis Hospital and the GP community. We are very pleased that this service is being expanded for patients in Clare and across the region.

I trust this clarifies the position, please contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



Colette Cowan  
Chief Executive Officer  
UL Hospitals Group