

CC/VAW/MC

Email: pgmidwestacute@hse.ie

1st November 2021

Ms Violet-Anne Wynne TD
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 51077/21, PQ 51982/21

*** To ask the Minister for Health the timeline for the announced expansion of the medical assessment unit in Ennis General Hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Violet-Anne Wynne**

***To ask the Minister for Health if the levels of services in the medical assessment unit of Ennis General Hospital have increased to 204 units per week as committed to in 2020; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Violet-Anne Wynne**

Dear Deputy Wynne,

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.

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.

The first phase of this expansion was effected in December 2020 with four additional slots being provided per day from Monday to Friday. Some additional staffing is required to ensure the further expansion of the MAU in Ennis. I am pleased to let you know that 1.0 NCHD (non-consultant hospital doctor), 0.5 WTE clerical support, and one additional member of staff in our cardiology services are now in post. In addition, three additional nursing staff will take up post in the near future. Additional resources in allied health, general support and radiology are also at various stages of an ongoing recruitment process.

The expansion of the MAU and recruitment of new staff has allowed us to increase weekly slots to 28 new patients per day and 18 new patients at weekends taking effect from November 1st, 2021. Once additional personnel are in place, we will be in a position to increase the number of weekly slots in the MAU to 32 between Monday and Friday and 20 at the weekends 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