

CC/JC/MC

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

27<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Mr Jackie Cahill TD,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

Re: PQ 43871/21, PQ 43854/2, PQ 43856/21, PQ 43857/21, PQ 43859/21

**\*To ask the Minister for Health the status of the appointment of a full-time consultant to the medical assessment unit of Nenagh Hospital as a matter of priority; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - Jackie Cahill**

**\*To ask the Minister for Health the number of days the medical assessment unit in Nenagh Hospital has been closed in 2021 as a result of staff shortages; if he will provide dates of closures; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Jackie Cahill**

**\*To ask the Minister for Health the number of days the medical assessment unit in Nenagh Hospital did not take patients when it was scheduled to do so to date in 2021 but did not officially announce it was closed; if he will provide details of these dates; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Jackie Cahill**

**\*To ask the Minister for Health the number of days the medical assessment unit in Nenagh Hospital rescheduled or cancelled an entire day's appointments due to an inability to see patients as a result of staff shortages; if he will provide details of these dates; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Jackie Cahill**

**\*To ask the Minister for Health if there was a day in 2021 when the medical assessment unit in Nenagh Hospital did not see patients or take referrals due to staff shortages, resulting in an effective closure of the unit and no official announcement was made that the unit would be closed that day; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Jackie Cahill**

Dear Deputy Cahill,

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.

I have been in contact with the relevant staff and I have been informed that UL Hospitals Group is actively engaged in the recruitment process for permanent physicians for Nenagh Hospital in order to maintain the existing service provided at Nenagh MAU. We are also examining how all of our Medical Assessment Units are operating across our Model 2 hospitals, in order to maximise patient flow across our sites.

Currently, one permanent consultant post has been submitted by Medical Manpower, UHL, for approval at the National Consultant Appointments Advisory Committee. Should approval be forthcoming, we will advance to the next stage of the recruitment process to fill this post.

The MAU in Nenagh Hospital was closed for a total of 12 days this year due to staff shortages. The decision to close the MAU in Nenagh Hospital was taken in order to ensure patient safety and following extensive efforts to secure locum cover for the MAU on those dates. Please see below for the dates that the MAU was closed:

- 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2021
- 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2021
- 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2021
- 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2021
- 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2021

Patients access services at our Medical Assessment Units by appointment. This is not a walk-in service and, as such, a public announcement is not required as would be the case in the event of a disruption to an unscheduled service such as an Injury Unit.

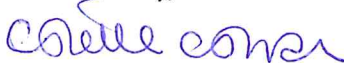
Service disruptions in the Medical Assessment Units are communicated to GPs, who are responsible for the majority of the referrals to our MAUs. GPs have access to MAU slots in Nenagh, Ennis, St John's and UHL through our Bed Bureau.

While the Nenagh unit was closed, we encouraged local GPs and out-of-hours doctors to instead refer appropriate patients to the MAUs at St John's Limerick and Ennis.

We apologise to any patient who has been inconvenienced by any temporary closures. The decision was taken to ensure patient safety, which we strive to protect at all times.

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**