



Géaroibríochtaí

Áras Dargan, An Ceantar Theas, An Bóthar Míleata, Cill Mhaighneann, Baile Átha Cliath 8

Acute Operations,

The Dargan Building, Heuston South Quarter, Military Road, Dublin 8

21st December 2022

Deputy Bernard J Durkan
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 61621/22

To ask the Minister for Health the extent to which he hopes to set up an emergency management team to deal with overcrowding and hospital accident and emergency departments with particular reference to ensuring that the highest possible standards prevail when dealing with the inflow of patients by facilitating their access to emergency treatment; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Durkan,

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.

There are currently a number of challenges being experienced by the Acute Hospitals within the HSE.

These include:

- Demographic pressures – a growing and ageing population resulting in increased demands for services, including a 15% increase in patients >75 years.
 - ED attendances year to date are over 1.3 million, an increase of 7.65% (almost 95,000 people) versus the same period in 2019.
- Covid 19, Influenza and RSV placing increased pressure on hospital capacity.
- Increasing Length of stay due to continuing volumes of Covid-19 cases and the ageing population, and increasing levels of delayed transfers of care (DTOCs).
- Challenges managing delayed transfers of care due to nursing home closures and providers struggling to source home care.

Investment in capacity over the last number of years has been significant and has provided additional beds, staffing and equipment across hospital and community services.

This winter, the HSE is investing over €168 million to support hospitals and community services to implement a range of initiatives to optimise patient care and improve patient experience during this challenging period. Areas of particular focus include:

- Building Capacity
- Development of alternative pathways of care



- Planning around Covid, Influenza and RSV surges.

The Winter Plan also includes measures to review and manage key performance indicators included within at local, regional and national level.

The HSE has established a National Crisis Management Team (NCMT) to oversee the health service response to the surge of winter virus infections which is expected to bring the highest pressure on the State's health service that has ever been seen in the coming weeks. This NCMT, which will augment the ongoing Winter Plan work, has met twice this week and will operate throughout the Christmas period.

I trust this response outlines the measures being taken by the Health Service to support the impact of increased activity in Emergency Departments and improve patient experience.

I trust this response is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jacqueline McNulty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jacqueline McNulty
General Manager Unscheduled Care
Acute Operations