



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Cúnta Náisiúnta
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Conarthaí Príomhchúraim
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
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Martin Browne TD
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2

28th February 2022

PQ 5824/22 - To ask the Minister for Health the number of general practitioners currently participating in the out-of-hours service by area; the number of hours that they provide to the service on a weekly, monthly and annual basis; the current status of the general practitioner contract; and the progress that has been made in relation to the obligation to provide general practitioner out-of-hours care in tabular form. -Martin Browne.

Dear Deputy Browne.

I refer to your PQ reference 5824/22. The current Number of GMS GPs currently participating in the GP Out of Hours Service nationally is 2512. Details by Co-Op are listed in the table below.

I should point out that in addition to the foregoing there are a number of GMS GPs who do not participate in the Out of Hours Co-Ops listed in the table here under but would provide Out-of- Hours cover with other GPs in their locality through rota type arrangements.

General Practitioners who hold General Medical Service Scheme Contracts with the HSE are required under their contracts to make suitable arrangements to enable contact to be made with them or their locums/deputies during out of hours periods for urgent cases. Prior to the emergence of GP Out of Hours Co-Ops, GPs discharged their out of hours obligations through rota arrangements with other GPs in their community or in some cases through a single handed arrangement. These local and somewhat ad-hoc arrangements were proving unsustainable in the context of the evolving and expanding role of General Practice as a key component of Primary Care.

To alleviate the onerous nature of the above mentioned out of hours arrangements the HSE made very significant investment over the past three decades in the establishment of GP Co-ops throughout the country through, inter alia, the provision of infrastructure, call centres, triage services, funding of nurses, drivers and admin support staff, transportation for on duty doctors, funding for computerisation of Co-Ops and subvention of the costs of locum doctors whose engagement ensures that the out of hours rotas are adequately filled and further alleviates the out of hours commitments of the GMS GP Co-Op members. In addition to the foregoing the GMS Contract provides for fee payments to GMS GPs for provision of in person out of hours consultations.

The HSE acknowledges the valuable role that GP Co-Ops have made and continue to make in enhancing the quality and accessibility of GP out of hours services and in sustaining this important point of contact for the population in the face of increasing demands on all of our public health services, both in hours and out of hours.

The 2019 GP Agreement provided for a multi-annual investment of €211m in General Practice by the State over the period 2019-2023. The 2019 Agreement also contains a commitment to commence a



fundamental review of GP contractual arrangements early in the lifetime of the Agreement with due regard to Government Policy and Slaintecare. It is expected that the review will provide the context for, among other things, a detailed review of GP Co-Ops in terms of governance, quality assurance, funding model and resourcing considerations etc.

Co-Op Name	Number of GMS GPs currently participating in the Out of Hours Service per Area.
North Doc	307
Caredoc- Cho 5	286
Caredoc CHO-6	30
Caredoc CHO-1	44
South Doc	421
Midoc	145
Nedoc	167
Shannondoc	141
Kildare/ West Wicklow	92
Nowdoc	105
Westdoc	275
E-doc	233
TLC	40
Lukedoc	57
dubdoc	77
limerickdoc	36
Galwaycitydoc	56
Total	2,512

Note - Details of hours provide by participating GPs is not available.

Yours sincerely,

Geraldine Crowley,
Assistant National Director,
Enhanced Community Care Programme &
Primary Care Contracts