



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig um Cheannasaí Seirbhíse do Chúram Príomhúil
Cúram Sláinte Phobail FSS an Mheán Iarthair
Ascaill Bhaile Choimín,
Páirc Gnó an Ráithín, Ráithín
Luimneach
Teil: 061 483722

Office of the Head of Service for Primary Care
HSE Mid West Community Healthcare
Ballycummin Ave, Raheen Business Park, Raheen,
Limerick
Tel: 061 483722

25th February 2022

Dep uty Martin Browne
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare St.
Dublin 2

Re.: PQ 5940/22 “To ask the Minister for Health the number of general practitioners currently participating in the ShannonDoc Out of Hours service by area; the number of hours they provide to the service on a weekly, monthly and annual basis in tabular form; 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”.

Dear Deputy Browne,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in regard to your parliamentary question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position. Firstly, can I apologise for the delay in responding to your Parliamentary Question.

I can advise that the number of General Practitioners currently participating in ShannonDoc in the Mid West Community Healthcare (CHO3) is 141. The table below outlines the breakdown of these locations by area:

CHO3 area	No. of GPs participating in ShannonDoc Out of Hours service
Limerick (City & County)	67
Nth. Tipperary	28
Co. Clare	46
Total	141

I can also advise that there has been no change in the status of the General Practitioner (GP) contract for those GPs who are contracted by the HSE to provide GP services to medical card patients i.e. the obligation as per the GP contract is to ensure that medical card patients have access to GP care 24/7 (i.e. 24 hours per day/7 days per week). In CHO3, the Out of Hours GP service contracted by the HSE is provided by ShannonDoc with whom 141 GPs are contracted to provide such services.

Please see below an outline of the ShannonDoc Treatment Centres and the operating hours of each Treatment Centre within CHO3:

ShannonDoc Treatment Centres and Operating Hours in CHO3

Limerick City & County:

Treatment Centre	Operating Hours: Midweek (Monday – Thursday)	Operating Hours – Weekends & Public Holidays
Dooradoyle Limerick City	6 p.m. – 8 a.m.	6 p.m. Friday – 8 a.m. Monday (9 a.m. on Bank Holidays) Public Holidays (incl. Good Friday & Christmas Eve) 9 a.m. – 8 a.m.
Newcastle West* Co. Limerick	6 p.m. – 8 a.m.	6 p.m. Friday – 8 a.m. Monday (9 a.m. on Bank Holidays) Public Holidays (incl. Good Friday & Christmas Eve) 9 a.m. – 8 a.m.
Hospital* Co. Limerick	6 p.m. – 8 a.m.	6 p.m. Friday – 8 a.m. Monday (9 a.m. on Bank Holidays) Public Holidays (incl. Good Friday & Christmas Eve) 9 a.m. – 8 a.m.

**Doctor may not be onsite at all times, but there is a doctor on duty available to see patients when and if required.*

North Tipperary

Treatment Centre	Operating Hours: Midweek (Monday – Thursday)	Operating Hours – Weekends & Public Holidays
Nenagh Co. Tipperary	6 p.m. – 8 a.m.	6 p.m. Friday – 8 a.m. Monday (9 a.m. on Bank Holidays) Public Holidays (incl. Good Friday & Christmas Eve) 9 a.m. – 8 a.m.
Roscrea* Co. Tipperary	6 p.m. – 11 p.m.	9 a.m. – 10 p.m.
Thurles* Co. Tipperary	6 p.m. – 11 p.m.	9 a.m. – 10 p.m.

**Doctor may not be onsite at all times, but there is a doctor on duty available to see patients when and if required.*

Co. Clare

Treatment Centre	Operating Hours: Midweek (Monday – Thursday)	Operating Hours – Weekends & Public Holidays
Ennis	6 p.m. – 8 a.m.	6 p.m. Friday – 8 a.m. Monday (9 a.m. on Bank Holidays) Public Holidays (incl. Good Friday & Christmas Eve) 9 a.m. – 8 a.m.
Shannon*	6 p.m. – 11 p.m.	9 a.m. – 10 p.m.
Miltown Malbay*	6 p.m. – 8 a.m. (Monday – Thursday) 6 p.m. – 9 a.m. (Friday)	Saturday 7 p.m. – 9 a.m. Sunday Sunday 7 p.m. – 8 a.m. Monday (9 a.m. Public Holidays) Public Holidays 7 p.m. to 8 a.m.
Kilrush**		9 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Ennistymon**		9 a.m. - 7 p.m.

**Doctor may not be onsite at all times, but there is a doctor on duty available to see patients when and if required.*

*** Currently served by Miltown Malbay Treatment Centre*

ShannonDoc have confirmed that a team of triage nurses, patient care administrators and central dispatchers are available midweek from 6 p.m. to 8 a.m. Monday to Thursday and 24 hour cover at weekends and Public Holidays from 6 p.m. Friday to 8 a.m. Monday. Patients can access the service by calling the new Lo-call number **0818 123 500 or 061 459 500**. Every patient will receive a full clinical assessment by a nurse free of charge.

A team of doctors and patient assistants are on duty midweek from 6 p.m. to 8 a.m. Monday to Thursday and 24 hour cover at weekends and Public Holidays from 6 p.m. Friday to 8 a.m. Monday. If deemed clinically appropriate by the triage nurse the patient will be referred for a Doctors' consultation. Depending on the clinical circumstances, the patient will be given either a face to face appointment at one of the ShannonDoc Treatment Centres, a virtual consultation or the doctor will see the patient in their own home. In short, every single patient that needs to be seen, is seen and the delivery of a quality clinical care remains the priority.

ShannonDoc provides urgent GP care only. It is not the emergency services and such patients that require emergency services should continue to contact 999 or 112. ShannonDoc has a Service Arrangement with the HSE whereby urgent cases should have an appointment within two hours of clinical assessment and less urgent cases should have an appointment within six hours. ShannonDoc continues to operate strictly by appointment only and is not a walk-in service.

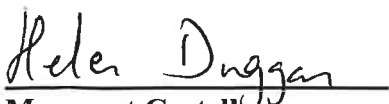
Enhanced Model of Care:

An enhanced model of care has been in operation since March 2020 through the introduction of the Mobile doctors working as a team and has ensured that all areas in the Midwest are adequately covered by the urgent out of hours GP service. ShannonDoc's operating model which incorporates a team based approach, utilises the doctors, triage nurses and support staff effectively. The introduction of Mobile doctors, Remote doctors and Core Treatment Centre doctors, all centrally co-ordinated by dispatchers and nurses ensure that all areas are covered. Even if a Doctor is not present in the Treatment Centre; a Mobile Doctor will be available to patients as required. This means that following triage, the Doctor will come and see patients in the relevant Centre or carry out a home visit or arrange a virtual consultation as deemed clinically appropriate. In addition, where there are increased demands in certain areas, support teams can be deployed from other locations providing an overall borderless service and ensuring services are provided where most needed.

Significant investment has been made to upgrade the telephone and IT infrastructure; which has played an important part in the remote capabilities of the service. Furthermore, the new E-prescribing function has enhanced the service to patients by facilitating prescriptions to be issued to the pharmacy of the patients' choice – without them having to leave their own home to attend the Treatment Centre.

I trust this information addresses the issues raised in your representation, if you have any further queries in this regard, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



p.p. **Margaret Costello**
Head of Service
Primary Care