



Oifig anStiúrthóir
An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta,

Foirgneamh Aibhneacha, Crosbhóthar
Thamhlachta, Tamhlacht,
Baile Átha Cliath D24 XNP2

Office of the Director
National Ambulance Service

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14th June 2022

Deputy David Cullinane TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ2845/22

To ask the Minister for Health the status of the intermediate care operator within National Ambulance Service (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. -David Cullinane

Details Supplied

The role of the ICO within NAS has changed. From original primary role of patient transportation, we are now being dispatched more frequently to emergency calls. Our official category within the HSE has us stated as "General support staff", the same category as an HCA within a hospital. This is an insult to our work and skills we have acquired. When will this be changed to ambulance staff or a more appropriate category to reflect our work and skills

PQ28250/22

To ask the Minister for Health if he will address a matter raised in correspondence (details supplied) in relation to intermediate care operative vehicles for the National Ambulance Service; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -David Cullinane

In recent months, new ICO vehicles have been integrated into the service. These are a Renault master van modified into an "ambulance". These vehicles are not fit for purpose. They do not comply with policies or even RSA standard with regard medication policy and emergency lights. When these concerns of staff will be addressed as management have turned a blind eye to staff concerns, taking into account risk assessment.

PQ28602/22

To ask the Minister for Health if he will re-categorise intermediate care operators from general support staff to ambulance staff or a more appropriate category which reflects the changing nature and responsibilities of the role and enhanced skills this requires, in view of the increasingly enhanced role which intermediate care operators perform within the National Ambulance Service and the increasing frequency of ICOs being dispatched to emergency calls rather than patient transportation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - David Cullinane

PQ28603/22

To ask the Minister for Health if he is concerned by the increasing use of modified intermediary care vehicles (details supplied) as makeshift ambulances by the National Ambulance Service; if the use of such vehicles as ambulances is consistent with national policy, safety standards or Road Safety Authority standards in relation to medication policy and emergency lights; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - David Cullinane





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Dear Deputy Cullinane,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) National Ambulance Service (NAS) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions which you submitted for response.

The role of an Intermediate Care Operative (ICO) / Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) has not changed. The primary role is to provide transport for inter hospital transfers, however on occasion ICO/EMT's are deployed to low acuity emergency calls in line with the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) dispatch standards and they operate within their clinical level of authorisation to practice.

We can confirm there is currently dialogue taking place between the three trade union partners and NAS in relation to developing future roles and responsibilities for clinical grades within the NAS.

Intermediate Care Vehicles (ICV's) have been a feature with the NAS patient care delivery system for over ten years. The current batch of 'new' ICV's have been introduced following a procurement process, which identifies the specifications and international standards required, a design and build program, that is overseen by a working group of interested stakeholders, an independent evaluation of the completed vehicle by external independent experts and authorities and a detailed training program to ensure that staff are competent in the utilization of the vehicle for the role that it is designed for. The current ICV meets all legislative and international standards required for this type of vehicle.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

William Merriman
Deputy Director
National Ambulance Service

