



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Priomhúil

Seomra 243, Ospidéal Dr Steevens,
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12th April 2022

Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 22316/22 - To ask the Minister for Health his plans to set up long Covid clinics outside of Dublin specifically for the West Cork region; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Christopher O'Sullivan

Dear Deputy O'Sullivan,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions (PQ 22316/22), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The HSE Interim Model of Care (MoC) for Long COVID was published in September 2021. The aim of the MoC is to provide a national approach to provision of services and supports for patients experiencing prolonged symptoms of COVID-19. It sets out a framework for the provision of these services and supports spanning General Practice, Community Services, Acute Hospitals and Mental Health Services. The resultant Interim Model of Care recommended the development of eight Post-Acute Clinics and six Long COVID clinics.

Post-Acute Clinics will be led by respiratory consultants and will provide assessment and ongoing care for patients within twelve weeks of infection. The following sites have been nominated as Post-Acute COVID clinics:

- Connolly Hospital Blanchardstown
- Mater University Hospital
- Tallaght University Hospital
- St. James University Hospital
- Cork University Hospital
- University Hospital Galway
- University Hospital Limerick
- Letterkenny University Hospital

Long COVID clinics will be led by infectious disease consultants and will provide assessment and ongoing care for patients with prolonged symptoms of COVID-19 for more than 12 weeks after initial onset of infection. The following hospital sites have been nominated as Long COVID clinics:

- St. James University Hospital
- Cork University Hospital
- University Hospital Galway
- University Hospital Limerick
- Beaumont University Hospital



- St. Vincent's University Hospital

The distribution of these clinics was informed on the basis of access to diagnostics and the availability of specialties such as infectious disease and respiratory services. The regional areas selected ensures that each hospital group has access to both Post-Acute and Long COVID clinics and therefore promotes geographical equity. The South West region, specifically West Cork will include Cork University Hospital and University Hospital Limerick.

Some of these clinics are already operational. They have been established in response to local need and are leveraging existing resources and capacity. The HSE is now working with these sites to expand their resources to ensure they can meet the requirements of the Model of Care and what is required within a local context. It is also working with sites that do not already have access to designated clinics so that these can become operational.

Recruitment of the personnel associated with each of the clinics has already commenced. This includes consultants in the area of infectious diseases, respiratory medicine, neurology and additional multi-disciplinary staff to support the work of these clinics.

At present, patients with persistent symptoms following COVID-19 infection may be followed up by their GP or in hospital settings as clinically appropriate. People in the community who are concerned about persistent symptoms following COVID-19 should contact their GP in the first instance, who will be able to assess and signpost them towards the service most appropriate to their needs, including on-ward referral to a Post-Acute or Long COVID clinic if appropriate.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TJ Dunford', written over a horizontal line.

TJ Dunford
Head of Operations - Primary Care
Community Operations