



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

27th September 2022

Deputy Patrick O'Donovan
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare St.
Dublin 2

Re: PO 44409/22 – “To ask the Minister for Health the plans that his Department has in place to alleviate the shortage of General Practitioners in rural Ireland in cases in which practices, are unable to find replacements for retiring General Practitioners specially in Galbally and Ballylanders, Co. Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter”.

Dear Deputy O'Donovan,

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.

The Primary Care Unit Manager has confirmed that Dr. Ní Rathaille, General Practitioner (GP) has advised the HSE of her intention to retire from her East Limerick practice on 18th December 2022.

Firstly, I must advise that I can only respond to you in relation to GP services for Dr. Ní Rathaille's medical card patients, as the responsibility of the HSE is in relation to the provision of GP services to GMS (medical card) patients only. The PCU Manager has confirmed that Dr. Ní Rathaille holds a General Medical Services (GMS) Contract with the HSE and she has also confirmed that Dr. Ní Rathaille's GMS Panel has recently been advertised.

The PCU Manager also advised that the Primary Care Unit will communicate with the GMS patients concerned advising them of the arrangements in place in sufficient time to ensure that they have continued access to GP services into the future.

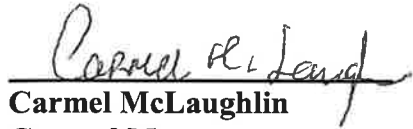
It is well recognised that there is currently an undersupply of GPs in Ireland. We are faced with a recruitment and retention challenge in the speciality. Many of the doctors delivering primary care are not on the specialist register, our population is growing and the extension of GP visit card eligibility on an incremental basis is Government policy.

Increasing demands on the health system as a direct result of the extension of free GP care, combined with an ageing population, will have a major impact on the future need for GPs.

Recruiting a single handed GP to take over as the sole GP in a practice is much more challenging than recruiting to a group practice. Working in a supported group practice environment with multiple GPs is a more attractive option for GPs and may be the future in attracting and retaining GPs in rural GP's practices.

I trust this information addresses the issues raised in your representation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Carmel McLaughlin", written over a horizontal line.

Carmel McLaughlin
General Manager
Primary Care