

2nd May, 2023

Mr. Pdraig O'Sullivan, T.D.,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 19014/23**

**"To ask the Minister for Health if he will give a commitment that a service (details supplied) in County Cork will be continued; if he will confirm that there will be no disruption to night-time services; and if he will make a statement on the matter."**

**Detail Supplied: South Doc Fermoy Co Cork.**

Dear Deputy O' Sullivan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

South West Doctors on Call Limited is an Out of Hours Family Doctor service for urgent medical care in Counties Cork and Kerry with its administrative headquarters and call centre in Killarney, Co Kerry. It has a membership of over 500 GPs and a network of 26 treatment centres of which eight are overnight and supported by a fleet of 19 vehicles, which are fully equipped for home visit situations.

SouthDoc provides a medical service to a population of approximately 736,000 in addition to the 3.3M visitors to the area, and dealt with over 231,000 patient contacts in 2022.

As a dynamic community, based service, which is provided across the two Counties Cork and Kerry SouthDoc constantly, reviews the service provision to ensure its continued viability. There are many factors involved in the delivery of the service to include local doctors, locum doctors, local staff and infrastructure. All these elements are supported by a bespoke IT system, Patient Management System as well as a Call Centre where the patient calls are acknowledged, documented and triaged.

In relation to Fermoy, the number of doctors on duty is aligned with demand. Therefore, at busy times such as public and general holiday periods, this number will increase. Generally, this may be one or two. There is one locum doctor who is part of a pool available to us and provided through a locum agency. Staff includes a driver and receptionist. The building is a HSE facility and is not leased by SouthDoc.

SouthDoc continually evaluates the service provision, formally with the HSE and on an ongoing basis internally. As there are numerous stakeholders concerned, any service reviews, which would potentially vary the delivery model, would involve appropriate advance engagement. Such advance engagement would focus on ensuring that patients receive the same standard of care whilst at the same time maximising the utilisation of the clinical personnel.

The HSE does not have any plans to cease operations of Southdoc Services in Fermoy. The HSE remains committed to providing a quality out-of-hours service, in partnership with SouthDoc in Fermoy and across Cork and Kerry.

SouthDoc continues to deliver the service in response to the patient needs in a manner, which assures safety, ease and equity of access. All patients are dealt with in accordance with their clinical needs.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Priscilla Lynch', with a large, stylized initial 'P'.

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**Priscilla Lynch**  
**Head of Service - Primary Care,**  
**Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**