



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 483226

Office of the Head of Service for Primary Care  
HSE Mid West Community Healthcare  
Ballycummin Ave, Raheen Business Park, Raheen,  
Limerick  
Tel: 061 483226

6<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Deputy Cathal Crowe  
4 Francis St.  
Ennis  
Co. Clare

**Re: PQ 7524/23 "To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide an update on the provision of Primary Care Centres and Out of Hours GP cover, ShannonDoc in Co. Clare". (Clarification received that the Deputy is seeking information on the level of scope and cover throughout Co. Clare; the opening hours and numbers who have availed of the service over the last year**

Dear Deputy Crowe,

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, I must advise you that I am responding to your query in relation to ShannonDoc services in Co. Clare only. I understand a separate response will be issued to you regarding the provision of Primary Care Centres in Co. Clare by our Estates Dept.

I can advise that the HSE has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place with ShannonDoc for the provision of General Practitioner (GP) Out of Hours services to GMS (medical card) patients in the HSE Mid West (CHO3) region. Key components of the SLA arrangement is the provision of an Out of Hours GP service in line with agreed clinical and operational Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) e.g. response times. Representatives from the HSE and ShannonDoc attend quarterly SLA meetings and ShannonDoc provides the HSE with regular activity reports outlining their level of activity.

ShannonDoc operates throughout the HSE Mid West (CHO3) region i.e. Limerick City & County, Co. Clare & Nth. Tipperary and it provides GP services to the following patients/clients:

- All GMS patients in the CHO3 area whose GP is a member of ShannonDoc Co-operative;
- All GMS patients temporarily visiting the CHO3 area;
- Patients visiting the CHO3 area who have an entitlement to services under EU Regulations (European Health Insurance Card EHIC);
- Private patients whose GP is a member of ShannonDoc;
- All residents in HSE Elderly Care Units.

ShannonDoc provides GP Out of Hours services from 11 treatment centres across the CHO3 region. In addition to the treatment centres, ShannonDoc also have mobile units available when and if required. The service is centrally co-ordinated and the phone triage nurse support is operated from the central call centre based in Limerick city.

I am outlining in the table below outlining the operating times of ShannonDoc GP Out of Hours Service across Co. Clare:

Treatment Centre	Operating hours – Midweek	Operating hours – Weekends & Public Holidays
Ennis (Core Centre*)	6 p.m. – 8 a.m.	6 p.m. Friday – 8 a.m. Monday (9 a.m. Public Holidays)
Shannon (Regional Centre**)	6 p.m. – 11 p.m.	9 a.m. – 10 p.m.
Miltown Malbay (Regional Centre**)	6 p.m. – 8 a.m. (Mon-Thur) 6 p.m. – 9 a.m. (Fri)	7 p.m. – 9 a.m. (Sat – Sun) 7 p.m. – 8 a.m. (Sun – Mon) (9a.m. Public Holidays)
Kilrush (Regional Centre**)		9 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Ennistymon (Regional Centre**)		9 a.m. – 7 p.m.
*Core Centre - staff present during times outlined above and available to attend Regional Centres as required.		
**Regional Centre – a doctor may not be on site at all times, but there is a doctor on duty available to see patients if and when required.		

If a doctor is not present in the Regional Treatment Centre, a Mobile Doctor will be available to patients as required. Following triage by the triage nurse which will identify the immediate need of the patient (i.e. home visit, visit to a treatment centre, phone or virtual consultation with a doctor or referral to Accident & Emergency) the Mobile Doctor will attend the patients preferred treatment centre if possible or the patient will be offered an appointment at their nearest treatment centre. ShannonDoc have advised that it operates a network of healthcare professionals including Doctors (Core, Mobile and Remote), Triage Nurses and Patient Support Staff working as a team through the Mid West region.

The activity reports from ShannonDoc for last year confirms that it dealt with approx. 102,907 calls/contacts from patients across the CHO3 region in 2022. ShannonDoc dealt with approx. 2,000 calls/contacts per week in 2022, this number can increase during busy periods e.g. Christmas/Winter period. Once triaged, the call/contact is classified as being an Emergency/Urgent or Routine call/contact and is dealt with appropriately.

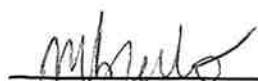
Along with GP Out of Hours services, ShannonDoc also provides a Pathology/Blood specimen service for GPs in the Mid West region to an agreed schedule and delivery to HSE Laboratories as directed.

ShannonDoc facilitates the organisation of the Forensic Medical Service (FME) by acting as a link between An Garda Síochána, the GP and the HSE. ShannonDoc manages the associated payments to the on-duty GPs.

ShannonDoc also facilitates the provision of sessional GPs to the HSE Mid West Drug & Alcohol Service to assist with the Primary Care Drug Assessment Unit (PCDAU) Methadone Clinic.

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

Yours sincerely,



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