



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
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27th February 2023

Deputy Róisín Shortall
Dail Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare St.,
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 7611/23 - “To ask the Minister for Health the additional resources that were provided to ShannonDoc, the out of hours GP service for mid-west region, before Christmas 2022; the way in which these resources were utilised; if the HSE set key performance indicators for this service; if so, to outline these key performance indicators; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Shortall,

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.

I can advise that the HSE have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place with ShannonDoc for the provision of Out of Hours GP services to GMS (medical card) patients across the Mid West region and ShannonDoc provides Out of Hours General Practitioner (GP) services across the HSE Mid-West area (CHO3) in Limerick (City & County), Co. Clare and North Tipperary.

Under the Winter 2022/2023 Support Measures for GP Services, ShannonDoc received two supplementary grants to support the GP Out of Hours Service with the expected increase in activity over the winter period.

The first supplementary grant payable has been in place since the onset of Covid 19. GP Out of Hours Co-ops received an additional allocation in recognition of the increased service activity due to the pandemic, with a particular focus on levels of triage. I can advise that for 2023, ShannonDoc received an additional payment of €189,655 under this arrangement.

The second supplementary grant payable to ShannonDoc was an allocation of of €193,000 for the Winter period (November 2022 – March 2023). This additional funding was made available by HSE (CHO3) to support ShannonDoc in providing additional resources to meet the expected increase in demand and to enhance the ShannonDoc GP Out of Hours service across the Mid-West region over the winter months. It enabled ShannonDoc to roster additional Doctors and Triage Nurses in Out of Hours Treatment Centres across the Mid-West region.

These additional resources made it possible for more patients to receive 'in person' consultations with the Out of Hours GP service. The main objectives of providing these additional resources was to reduce the number of referrals to Emergency Departments and to reduce the number of patients presenting directly to EDs without having first been seen (triaged) by an Out of Hours GP service.

The table below provides a breakdown in the additional resources required by ShannonDoc to address the increased activity over the winter period:

Additional resource approved	Midweek	Weekends & Public Holidays	Total
Triage Nurse	€15,761	€41,621	€57,381
Doctor	€42,000	€94,000	€136,000
Total	€57,761	€135,621	€193,381

As advised above, the HSE has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with ShannonDoc and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) form part of the SLA arrangement. KPIs are set out for each service provider (e.g. ShannonDoc) and the service provider must provide the HSE with confirmation that the level of service expected is been met. In the case of ShannonDoc, KPIs are agreed and set around response times i.e. when a call/contact has been triaged and it is prioritised as Emergency, Urgent or Routine, the following response times are expected by the HSE:

Emergency – passed to appropriate services within three minutes and where requested to be seen within 45 minutes;

Urgent – 90% of urgent cases should have an appointment within two hours of clinical assessment (taking into account travel time and doctor workload);

Routine – 90% of less urgent cases should have an appointment within six hours of clinical assessment.

The Primary Care Unit Manager has confirmed that ShannonDoc provide her with comprehensive activity reports which give a breakdown of their activity including the number of calls/contacts received by the service and the outcome of these calls/contacts. Performance meetings are held quarterly with ShannonDoc to discuss KPIs and other matters. These meetings are attended by representatives from ShannonDoc and the HSE.

In relation to the additional funding allocation for the Winter period (November 2022 – March 2023) the Primary Care Unit Manager receives a weekly activity report from ShannonDoc confirming how the additional resources have been utilised (i.e. details of the doctor/nurse on duty, the number of hours they were on duty and the number of calls/contacts they dealt with whilst they were on duty). These activity reports also confirm the outcome of the calls/contacts received i.e. if the patient attended the treatment centre, if a home visit was arranged or if it was a doctor/nurse advice/telephone consultation took place. These additional resources supported ShannonDoc in meeting the agreed response times as per the SLA with the HSE. I can also advise that the HSE continues to monitor ShannonDoc activity on a weekly basis.

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

Yours sincerely,



Margaret Costello
Head of Service
Primary Care