



**Oifig an Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta  
Géaroibríochtaí**

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24<sup>th</sup> February 2023

**Deputy Bernard J Durkan  
Dáil Eireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2**

**PQ 7972/23**

**To ask the Minister for Health the extent to which he hopes to set up an emergency management team to deal with overcrowding and hospital accident and emergency departments with particular reference to ensuring that the highest possible standards prevail when dealing with the inflow of patients by facilitating their access to emergency treatment. In addition, if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Durkan,

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.

There are currently a number of challenges being experienced by the Acute Hospitals within the HSE.

These include:

- Demographic pressures – a growing and ageing population resulting in increased demands for services, including a 15.% increase in patients >75 years at the end of 2022 vs 2019 (Pre Covid Levels).
  - ED attendances for 2022 are over 1.46 million, an increase of 7.5% (over 102,000 people) versus the same period in 2019.
- Ongoing issues with regard to Covid 19, Influenza and RSV.
- Increasing Length of stay due to an increase in the number of patients > 75 years presenting.
- Challenges managing delayed transfers of care due to nursing home closures and providers struggling to source homecare.

Investment in capacity over the last number of years has been significant and has provided additional beds, staffing and equipment across hospital and community services.

This winter, the HSE allocated over €168 million to support hospitals and community services to implement a range of initiatives to optimise patient care and improve patient experience during this challenging period. Areas of particular focus include:

- Building Capacity, including 51 new EM Consultant posts, additional nursing posts in the emergency departments under the safer staffing framework, and a bespoke allocation of staffing to each hospital.
- Development of alternative pathways of care
- Planning around Covid, Influenza and RSV surges.



The Winter Plan also includes measures to review and manage key performance indicators included within at local, regional and national level.

The HSE established a National Crisis Management Team (NCMT) to oversee the health service response to the surge of winter virus infections. This NCMT, which will augment the ongoing Winter Plan work, continue to meet twice a week.

I trust this response outlines the measures being taken by the Health Service to support the impact of increased activity in Emergency Departments and improve patient experience.

I trust this response is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jacqueline McNulty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Jacqueline McNulty**  
**General Manager Unscheduled Care**  
**Acute Operations**