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14 March 2023

Deputy Brendan Smith  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ 9913/23**

**To ask the Minister for Health the proposals, if any, there are to change protocols for ambulance personnel in the discharge of patients to hospitals (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Brendan Smith**

**Details Supplied: At a public meeting on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention issues it was suggested by a member of the audience with paramedic experience that ambulance paramedics should be able to bring patients directly to Psychiatric Units in hospitals where such patients are presenting as suicidal. It was suggested that at times admissions to Emergency Departments were not appropriate for such patients.**

Dear Deputy Smith,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) National Ambulance Service (NAS) 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.

Currently the NAS bring all patients to the nearest most appropriate Emergency Department where the patients are accessed and if the patient requires additional mental health support that the hospital engages with the relevant mental health services and transfer to the relevant unit for further treatment and care.

The NAS currently have a mental health sign posting service in its' National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) and are exploring the introduction of a mental health specialist who would be in a position to provide additional support and management of patients who present with mental health issues.

I hope this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

William Merriman  
Director of Operations  
National Ambulance Service

