

CC/MC/MD

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23rd January 2023

Matt Carthy TD
Dàil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

PQ 1842/23

To ask the Minister for Health the treatments that are available at the accident and emergency department or the minor injuries unit at Nenagh Hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Matt Carthy

PQ 1843/23

To ask the Minister for Health the treatments that are available at the accident and emergency department or the minor injuries unit at Ennis Hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Matt Carthy

PQ 1851/23

To ask the Minister for Health if ambulances are permitted to bring patients to the accident and emergency or the minor injuries unit at Nenagh Hospital; the circumstances in which this is permitted; the number of times that this occurred in 2022; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Matt Carthy

PQ 1852/23

To ask the Minister for Health if ambulances are permitted to bring patients to the accident and emergency or the minor injuries unit at Ennis Hospital; the circumstances in which this is permitted; the number of times that this occurred in 2022; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Matt Carthy

PQ1860/23

To ask the Minister for Health the in-patient services and inpatient surgical services that are available at Nenagh Hospital; the number of days that a patient can remain at the hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Matt Carthy

PQ1861/23

To ask the Minister for Health the in-patient services and inpatient surgical services that are available at Ennis Hospital; the number of days that a patient can remain at the hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Matt Carthy

Dear Deputy Carthy,

I wish to acknowledge your questions in relation to Ennis and Nenagh hospitals.

UL Hospitals Group comprises six hospitals working as a single system. Model 2 hospitals like Ennis and Nenagh are essential in how we provide our services across the three counties – all in line with national policy including the Smaller Hospitals Framework.

Published in February 2013, this framework has shaped how model 2 hospitals operate. Within UL Hospitals Group, Ennis and Nenagh play an integral role in the provision of ambulatory care, chronic disease management, day surgery and endoscopy. Both Ennis and Nenagh have modern inpatient accommodation with better isolation facilities than is currently available at the region's model 4 hospital at UHL.

Injury Units at Ennis and Nenagh have just had their busiest years to date. Indeed, during 2022, a total of 38,523 patients attended our Injury Units in Ennis, Nenagh and St John's, representing a 30% increase on 2021. The Injury Unit at Ennis was redeveloped at a cost of €2million in 2021. Both Ennis and Nenagh Injury Units have capacity to see more patients.

Both Ennis and Nenagh Injury Units are open 8.00am to 8.00pm, 7 days a week. Governance is provided by a consultant in emergency medicine and the service is delivered by Emergency Care Physicians and GPs. Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANP) also assess and treat patients and refer accordingly.

Injury units can treat the following for patients aged five and over:

- broken bones to legs, from knees to toes
- broken bones to arms, from collarbone (clavicle) to fingertips
- all sprains and strains
- minor facial injuries (including oral, dental and nasal injuries)
- minor scalds and burns
- wounds, bites, cuts, grazes and scalp lacerations (cuts)
- small abscesses and boils
- splinters and fish hooks
- things stuck in eyes, ears or nose
- minor head injuries (fully-conscious patients, who did not have loss of consciousness or vomit after the head injury)

For further information on what may and may not be treated at an Injury Unit, please see [here](#)

<https://www2.hse.ie/emergencies/when-to-visit-an-injury-unit/#What-injury-units-can-treat>

Please note that our Injury Units do not accept patients transferred by ambulance. This is in line with national policy.



Ennis Hospital has capacity for 50 medical inpatients and Nenagh Hospital has an inpatient bed capacity of 52, all medical beds. Discharges or transfers from these hospitals are clinical decisions.

The average length of stay for medical patients in Nenagh Hospital, at 13 days in 2022, is higher than the average for UL Hospitals Group due to the age profile of its patients and the presence in Nenagh of the Clinical Recovery and Support Unit (CRSU), allowing patients with complex care needs access enhanced supports from allied health professionals as they continue their rehabilitation and recovery.

Both Ennis and Nenagh Hospital provide day surgery and endoscopy. No inpatient surgery is carried out at either location.

Day Surgery services provided at Ennis Hospital include colorectal surgery, breast day case surgery, gynaecology surgery, dental surgery for children and adults, urology diagnostic assessments (cystoscopy) and surgery, general surgery and vascular surgery. Dermatology also provides a day surgery for procedures requiring both local and general anaesthetic.

A theatre upgrade was recently approved for Ennis Hospital as part of the HSE's Capital Programme for 2022. The approved capital budget for this project is €9.95m and is currently at the design stage.

The current Theatre, Decontamination Suite and Day Ward complex opened at Nenagh Hospital in 2014. The development – representing a circa €6.2 million capital investment by the HSE – comprises two modern operating theatres, a minor procedure room, theatre recovery area, a 10-bed surgical day ward, pre-operative assessment facilities, a discharge lounge and other surgical department support spaces.

Day surgery services at Nenagh Hospital include general surgery, colorectal surgery, vascular, max fax, gynaecology, orthopaedics, dermatology, urology, dental for both children and special needs adults.

The new €1.4-million extension to the outpatients department at Nenagh includes a room for minor gynaecology procedures as part of the wider Regional Hub for Women's Health. This already includes ambulatory gynaecology and a menopause clinic for outpatients. A new subfertility clinic for Nenagh is also planned.

Both Ennis and Nenagh hospitals continually achieve above average patient satisfaction ratings in the National Inpatient Experience Survey. We continue to expand services at Ennis and Nenagh in line with national policy.

As you may be aware, the National Ambulance Service Medical Assessment Unit (MAU) pathway for 112/999 patients commenced at Ennis Hospital on Monday, January 9th.

This pathway was successfully trialled in north Cork and Mallow General Hospital in 2022. It allows stable medical patients meeting agreed clinical criteria to be treated in a Model 2 hospital. A key



element is a telephone referral from the treating paramedic to the receiving MAU doctor, which ensures that the right patient is brought to the MAU.

This pathway will result in patients receiving medical treatment in a hospital closer to their home, reduce ED presentations and release ambulances more quickly to respond to other emergency calls.

112/999 patients that do not meet these clinical criteria will continue to be transported to Emergency Departments for assessment and treatment. The Medical Assessment Unit in Ennis Hospital treats patients referred by GPs, ShannonDoc and now NAS paramedics. It is essential that unwell medical patients do not attend the MAU without a referral.

We are pleased with the progress of this initiative in the first three weeks. An evaluation of the new pathway involving our MAU physicians and our partners in NAS will be necessary before a decision is made on any expansion of the service.

However, we have every expectation of success for this new pathway, with a view to continuing the service in Ennis MAU and expanding it to our medical assessment units in Nenagh and St John's.

Any additional resource requirements identified in the context of the new NAS protocol will be escalated to the HSE nationally.

Medical assessment units at Ennis, Nenagh and St John's saw 12,737 patients in 2022, a new high and an increase of 19% on 2021.

I trust this clarifies the position, please contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



Prof Colette Cowan
Chief Executive Officer
UL Hospitals Group