

CC/VAW/MC

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01<sup>st</sup> February 2023

Ms Violet-Anne Wynne TD,  
Dàil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 3256/23, PQ 3257/23**

**To ask the Minister for Health if there is a timeline in place to institute surgical hubs at University Hospital Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Violet-Anne Wynne**

**To ask the Minister for Health the services that will be offered at proposed surgical hubs at University Hospital Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Violet-Anne Wynne**

Dear Deputy Wynne,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

We welcome the recent announcement by the Minister for Health regarding his plans to include Limerick as one of five regional scheduled care hubs. We will work with all stakeholders on any plan to increase access to scheduled care in the region and to ensure that this model best meets the needs of the people of the Mid-West.

We await further detail about the proposed structure of this facility. We will be in contact with all relevant stakeholders as soon as this detail is available.

Separately, as you are aware, it is the belief of UL Hospitals Group that the Mid-West must have an elective hospital to serve the well described needs of patients in the Mid-West.

Admissions through the ED at UHL account for 83% of inpatient bed days, leaving limited capacity for elective activity. Frequent cancellations of elective activity to accommodate increases in demand for emergency care have resulted in long waiting lists.

In 2022, UL Hospitals Group met the targets for inpatient, day case and endoscopy waiting lists as set out in the National Waiting List Action Plan. This was largely achieved through the use of private, virtual and extra out-of-hours clinics including various outsourcing and insourcing initiatives.

However this is not financially sustainable nor is it fair on the many patients travelling outside of the region for their procedures.

As well as this, the private sector is unable to mitigate demand effectively; private bed capacity in the Mid-West is the lowest in the country with only c. 50 beds within the Bon Secours Hospital, Limerick,

compared with > 250 beds available at the Galway Clinic & Bon Secours Hospital, and >600 beds in the South / South West catchment area.

We note the recent remarks of the Taoiseach in relation to additional planned private capacity in the region, including Bons Secours and UPMC. We will engage with all stakeholders to ensure greater access for public patients to reduce waiting lists.

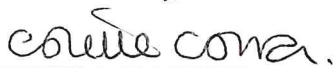
Our model 2 hospitals have an excellent track record in providing day surgery while Croom Orthopaedic Hospital is recognised as a centre of excellence in orthopaedics. The new theatre complex in Croom has allowed us to add to the surgical sub-specialties in Croom.

An elective hospital would create capacity for patients waiting for sub-acute care. Increased demand for emergency care in recent months has led to the frequent cancellation of elective activity across the sites of UL Hospitals Group.

An elective hospital would ensure that scheduled care is no longer disrupted while at the same time creating much-needed capacity at UHL to deliver emergency and time-critical services.

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**