

23rd June, 2023

Mr. Michael Healy-Rae, T.D.,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 29813/23**

**“To ask the Minister for Health if South Doc services will remain unchanged in the Kerry area (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter.”**

**Detail Supplied: “Minister can I receive reassurance that the present structure of South Doc will remain unchanged in the Kerry area. For example, Kenmare, we do not want to see a structure where the service will be eliminated, centralised or be interfered with in any way.”**

Dear Deputy Healy-Rae,

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.

South West Doctors on Call Limited is an Out of Hours Family Doctor service for urgent medical care in Counties Cork and Kerry with its administrative headquarters and call centre in Killarney, Co Kerry. It has a membership of over 500 GPs and a network of 26 treatment centres of which eight are overnight and supported by a fleet of 19 vehicles, which are fully equipped for home visit situations.

SouthDoc provides a medical service to a population of approximately 736,000 in addition to the 3.3M visitors to the area, and dealt with over 231,000 patient contacts in 2022.

As a dynamic community based out of hours family doctor service, which is provided across the two counties Cork and Kerry SouthDoc constantly, reviews the service provision to ensure its continued viability. There are many factors involved in the delivery of the service to include local doctors, locum doctors, local staff and infrastructure. All these elements are supported by a bespoke IT system, Patient Management System as well as a Call Centre where the patient calls are acknowledged, documented and triaged.

SouthDoc continually evaluates the service provision, formally with the HSE and on an ongoing basis internally. As there are numerous stakeholders concerned, any service reviews, which includes the out of hours service in Kenmare, which would potentially vary the delivery model would involve appropriate advance engagement with the relevant parties. Such advance engagement would focus on ensuring that patients receive the same standard of care whilst at the same time maximising the utilisation of the clinical personnel.

There are no plans at present to change the operational structure of the service in Kenmare.

SouthDoc continues to deliver the service in response to the patient needs in a manner, which assures safety, ease and equity of access. All patients are dealt with in accordance with their clinical needs.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Priscilla Lynch', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

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**Priscilla Lynch**  
**Head of Service - Primary Care,**  
**Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**