



Seirbhísí do Dhaoine Scothaosta, Cúram
Sláinte Pobail an Mheán-Iarthair,
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte, Teach
an Phiarsaigh, Bothar an Phiarsaigh, Pairc
Gnó an Raithín, Luimneach I V94 1R71

**Head of Service - Older Persons, HSE Mid-West
Community Healthcare, Pearse House, Pearse
Road, Raheen Business Park, Limerick V94 1R71.**

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

DATE: 6th April 2023

Deputy Paul Murphy
Houses of the Oireachtas
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 12522/23

To ask the Minister for Health the exact supports that were offered to a care facility (Ennis Road Care Facility) in Limerick during the Covid outbreak in 2020 when there was a huge loss of life; if they went in to take over the service; and if not, the reason therefor, given the facility had little to no staff to care for dying residents.

Dear Deputy Murphy

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. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position:

As part of the HSE COVID 19 response, there was a requirement on each of the Area Crisis Management Teams to establish a number of Residential Care & Home Support Covid-19 Response Teams (CRT) to address COVID-19 outbreaks in their area. In response to this the Mid-West COVID 19 Response Support Team was set up on the 30th March 2020.

The purpose of the Mid-West COVID 19 Response Support Team is to support the prevention, identification, and management of COVID 19 outbreaks across residential care facilities for the private nursing homes.

The HSE Covid Response Support Team (CRST) provided supports and interventions to the Ennis Road Care Facility, Co. Clare to support safe delivery of resident care in the areas of;

- Assistance with queries related to specialist teams including the Community Testing Team, the Department of Public Health, Palliative Care and Psychological Support;
- Workforce Planning, including HSE staffing;
- Infection Prevention and Control;
- PPE;
- Transport and Accommodation for Healthcare Workers.

OUTBREAK SUMMARY:

- A Covid-19 Outbreak was declared open in the Ennis Road Care Facility, Co. Clare from 23rd April-28th July 2020 by the Department of Public Health.

OUTBREAK OUTCOMES (INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM ENNIS ROAD CARE FACILITY):

- Covid-19 positive residents: 56 (of 70)
- Covid-19 Hospital admissions during outbreak: 17
- Covid-19 related resident RIPs: 17
- Covid-19 positive staff: 40 (of 78)

CRST SUPPORT CALLS:

- Extensive and on-going communication between the CRST and nursing home management was carried out for the duration of this outbreak, inclusive of 133 x support calls:
 - *Daily Calls 7-day/week* From week beginning 20th April 2020
 - *Daily Calls 5-day/week* From week beginning 13th July 2020
 - *Four times/week calls* From week beginning 27th July 2020
 - *Twice weekly calls* From week beginning 31st August 2020
- The health and wellbeing of both Covid positive and not-detected residents was monitored closely, and any concerns were communicated as appropriate.
- Staffing levels and concerns were monitored and escalated as appropriate.
- IP&C and PPE requirements were monitored, and any PPE requirements were responded to and escalated as appropriate.
- Management were encouraged to contact the CRST with any queries and concerns outside of the regular daily support calls.

OUTBREAK CONTROL TEAM:

- Outbreak Control Team (OCT) meetings were established to provide leadership in an integrated and co-ordinated manner to HSE Older Person's Residential Services and Private Nursing Homes and to manage any outbreaks/clusters of COVID-19.
- During the period of this outbreak:
 - *OCT meetings held twice weekly* April 2020-week ending 12th June 2020,
 - *OCT meetings held weekly* Week beginning 15th June 2020-end of outbreak.
- Attendance included Public Health Doctors, Older Person's Services, Community Testing, UHL Microbiology Department, and members of the CRST, including Support Co-ordinators, the IP&C Lead and the Workforce Planning Lead.

RESIDENTS AND STAFF TESTING:

Residents:

- Mass Testing of residents took place on 2 occasions during the outbreak. Mass Testing detected 50 of the 56 positive residents in the facility.
- The last positive resident detected during this outbreak was swabbed on 27th May 2020, and this was through GP referral.

Staff:

- Mass Testing of staff took place on 1 occasion in April 2020. 24 of the 40 positive staff identified during this outbreak were detected through Mass Testing.
- Weekly Staff Serial Testing began in the facility on 28th June 2020 and took place over 4 weeks June-July 2020. 2 of the 40 positive staff identified during this outbreak were detected through Staff Serial Testing.

- The last positive staff member detected during this outbreak was swabbed on 19th July 2020, through Staff Serial Testing.
- Queries and concerns were escalated to the Community Testing Team by the CRST and followed up as required.

WORKFORCE PLANNING – STAFFING SUPPORT:

- In order to support the facility through their significant outbreak and with high numbers of staff in the facility on Covid Leave, staffing support was facilitated by the HSE to the facility from 26th April-27th August 2020.
- Staffing support included:
 - HSE CRST staff pool,
 - Healthcare workers recruited through the On Call for Ireland campaign,
 - HSE staff redeployed from Community services (e.g. Primary Care, Mental Health) and Acute services (e.g. ULHG, St. Johns),
 - Redeployed staff from Disability Agencies (Enable Ireland and Headway),
 - Agency staff.
- 48 x staff worked 389 x shifts:
 - 17 x Nursing Staff, including 3 x Senior Nursing Staff, fulfilled 191 x nursing shifts,
 - 27 x Healthcare Assistants (HCAs) fulfilled 146 x HCA shifts,
 - 4 x Multi-Task Attendant (MTA) fulfilled 52 x shifts.
- The CRST encouraged the DON and Proprietor to make regular contact with the agencies to secure staff for the facility.

HSE REVIEW TEAM:

- Due to significant concerns regarding the outbreak, a HSE Review Team was deployed to the nursing home on 14th May 2020. Recommendations were given to the Proprietor.

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL (IP&C):

- Ennis Road Care Facility required and received intensive IP&C support from early in their outbreak. IP&C support played a major role throughout this outbreak:
- IP&C observational site visits x 7 by the CRST IP&C Lead were facilitated to the nursing home. Observations were made of IP&C measures currently in place, staff education on PPE given, and recommendations and support given regarding Covid-19 Outbreak Management.
- Significant phone and email support from the IP&C Lead was facilitated;
- Updated HPSC IP&C and Public Health Guidelines were provided;
- Thrice weekly IP&C education and information sessions were provided via zoom, led by the CRST IP&C Lead;
- Induction training including basic IP&C training provided to new international recruits in person and HSE Land and Mid-West IP&C video training resources shared.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT:

- The CRST advised the nursing home of the psychological supports that were available to them, including the Psychological Support Helpline.
- Support Co-ordinators were mindful of and attentive to the stress that the outbreak has caused on the facility and its staff. Support Co-ordinators enquired on each call as to staff wellbeing and how the CRST could support them.
- The nursing home's contact details were provided to HSE Psychological Support Services for further follow up as they were experiencing an outbreak.
- The HSE Principal Psychologist offered management training for psychological support.

PPE AND OXYGEN :

- Ennis Road Care Facility required frequent and urgent PPE deliveries from early in their outbreak.
- PPE Requirements from 1st April to 16th June 2020
 - Emergency PPE supplies x 9

- PPE deliveries x 2
- Oxygen deliveries x2
- PPEs put on hold on 16th June 2020 as requested by the nursing home as they had sufficient supply.

ACCOMMODATION:

During April-July 2020 Ennis Road Care Facility availed of Accommodation Support under the HSE Temporary Staff Accommodation Scheme:

12 staff members availed of total of 188 nights of accommodation:

- *April:* 1 night, 1 staff
- *May:* 108 nights, 11 staff
- *June:* 60 nights, 2 staff
- *July:* 19 nights, 4 staff

The above information outlines the supports and interventions that were provided by the HSE to the facility during the Covid outbreak in 2020.

Yours sincerely



Aisling Ryan
Head of Service – Older Persons Services
HSE Mid-West Community Healthcare