



Oifig an Príomhoifigeach
Eagraíocht Cúram Sláinte Pobail Lár Tire,
An Lú, An Mhí

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte,
Oifig Cheantair, Bóthar Ardáin,
An Tulach Mhór, Co. Uíbh Fhailí.

Office of the Chief Officer
Community Health Organisation
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30th May, 2023

Mr. Colm Burke T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Re: Parliamentary Question - 21981/23

To ask the Minister for Health the reason a HSE nursing home bed costs €2,585 per week in County Laois, a cost far greater than nursing home beds in any other HSE facility in the country; the reason there is such a difference of over €1,500 from the cost of nursing home beds which are provided by private nursing homes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Colm Burke

Dear Deputy Burke,

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 I outline the position below.

It has been acknowledged that variations exist in the cost of care across Community Nursing Units (CNU) and private nursing homes, with the CNU generally having a higher cost of care to accommodate a person under the Fair Deal Scheme. The cost of care is impacted by a number of factors including the number of residents in a Community Nursing Unit (CNU). It should be noted that two (2) out of three (3) HSE CNU in Laois have a lower number of residents than many private nursing homes.

There are a number of other contributing factors to this higher cost which include but is not limited to:

- Higher proportion of maximum dependency levels of residents in CNU. It is difficult to establish like-for-like comparisons, particularly when considering differences in dependency levels and skill mix.
- CNU generally have higher staff to resident ratios in place.
- Variances in skill mix in CNU and private nursing homes, including the implementation of national pay increases for public servants awarded in 2022.
- Reductions in a number of multi-occupancy long-stay CNU beds to comply with health and safety, fire regulations and HIQA compliance with residential care standards.



- Reduction in the number of long stay CNU beds due to Public Health requirements to have isolation rooms available due to infection control measures associated with Covid-19 and other infections.
- Within the CNUs a range of goods and services, not covered by the Fair Deal scheme, are provided such as access to social programmes and supply of incontinence wear.
- The layout of many of the public nursing homes affect staffing levels.
- Maintenance costs associated with older buildings used as CNUs, which were typically not intended for long term residential care
- A number of these CNUs are located in rural areas which may not be considered commercially viable for private operators, making them more costly.

Similar to the private nursing homes, the CNUs have faced challenges relating to price inflation and increased energy costs. It is necessary that these increased cost pressures are managed in line with the regulatory and contractual obligations, while also maintaining the resident's quality of care.

I trust the above is in order but please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'A Kennedy'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Anne Kennedy
Acting Chief Officer
Midlands Louth Meath Community Health Organisation