



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Oibríochtaí
An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta
Bloc 4, Lárionad Gnó,
Tulach Mhór,
Co. Uíbh Fhailí, R35 FH59

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05th April 2024

Deputy Alan Dillion
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2.

PQ12329/24

To ask the Minister for Health the consideration being given to the establishment of a helicopter emergency medical system; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Alan Dillon

Dear Deputy Dillion,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) National Ambulance Service (NAS) 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.

The NAS is the statutory pre-hospital emergency and intermediate care provider for the Irish State. The NAS currently operate two services for Helicopter Emergency Medical System (HEMS) - one with an Aircorp partner based in Athlone, and a second with private partner based in Rathcoole, Co. Cork.

All aeromedical services nationally and internationally are tasked by a specialist aeromedical desk based in the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC).

Demographic spread, geography (including limitations of rural road networks), a dispersed rural population particularly on the western seaboard, weather, and reduced daylight during the winter months are all factors for consideration when deciding on an air or road-based response for the retrieval and management of the critically ill patient. The establishment of trauma care networks, the centralisation of care for time critical conditions such as heart attack and stroke, and acute hospital and emergency department reconfiguration are some of the developments that will drive the need to enhance the current level of aeromedical service.

Patients requiring aeromedical treatment or transfer are often the most critically ill or injured patients transported to receiving hospitals or from hospitals to specialist centres, both nationally and internationally. These patients are relatively small in number but are high in acuity, with a disproportionate number of life-years yet to live when compared to the general NAS patient population. Patients requiring aeromedical interventions remain some of the most clinically vulnerable and fragile patients treated and transported by the NAS.

I trust this information is of assistance.





**Oifig an Stiúrtóra Oibríochtaí
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Yours sincerely

William Merriman

Director of Operations

National Ambulance Service

