



23rd April 2025

Deputy Brendan Smith
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Re PQ5406/25 To ask the Minister for Health if she will ensure that adequate funding will be provided for a comprehensive health care programme, including Cavan/Monaghan (the need to have adequate resources provided for a 7 day week palliative care programme with sufficient staffing levels for Cavan and Monaghan); and if she will make a statement on the matter – Brendan Smith

Dear Deputy Smith

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 outlined the position as follows.

Palliative Care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems be they physical, psychosocial and spiritual (WHO 2002).

The Regional Specialist Palliative Care Service covers Louth, Meath, Cavan and Monaghan. It works with primary care teams (GP, PHN, Hospital Consultant and other health care professionals such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists and social workers) in the community and hospital providing specialist support, advice and information for health care professionals, patients and families, visiting patients at home, in hospital, nursing homes or any other care setting.

There is a multi-disciplinary palliative care team in Cavan/Monaghan. However, two Clinical Nurse Specialist posts and one Senior Medical Social Worker post are currently vacant and subject to the Pay and Numbers Strategy. Risk assessments have been submitted with regard to each of these posts. As a consequence there is a curtailed service Monday to Friday and planned essential visits only on a Saturday, Sunday and public holidays.

The multidisciplinary specialist palliative care home team presently comprises the staff as detailed below;

Grade	WTE
CNM3 Nurse Manager	1.0
CNM2 (Complementary Therapies)	0.96
Clinical Nurse Specialist	7.6
Social Worker	1.0
Physiotherapist	1.24
Occupational Therapist	1.0



Clerical Officer	2.3
Consultant Physician – supports the home team and also works in Cavan Monaghan acute setting including providing outpatient clinics	1.0

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,

Joseph Ruane
Head of Primary Care Services
Midlands Louth Meath Community Health Organisation