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Áras na Ceachan,
Páirc Ghnó agus Teicneolaíochta,
Bóthar na Modh Feirme,
Corcaigh. T12 XHT4

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Mr. Colm Burke, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 31433/25.

"To ask the Minister for Health the action being taken to reopen podiatry services in the Mayfield area in Cork in view of the fact it was temporarily closed and the patients transferred to Saint Mary's Campus, Gurranabraher to which no additional staff have been assigned to cater for the increase in numbers that they now have to deal with; and if she will make a statement on the matter."

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.

Primary Care Services are organised on a geographical basis across Ireland with 96 Community Healthcare Networks (CHNs) nationwide. There are 14 CHNs operational across Cork and Kerry. CHN 8, known as North Cork City Central, has a population of 35,729 and comprises of five areas: (i) Blackpool/The Glen; (ii) Carrignavar; (iii) Mayfield; (iv) Montenotte/Tivoli; and (v) St. Patrick's. CHN 8 covers areas to the north side of Cork city.

Due to the high number of podiatry vacancies across HSE South West, and with no podiatrist in post in CHN 8, a decision was taken to move to centralised care. CHN 8 podiatry services relocated to St. Mary's Primary Care Centre, where the service is currently provided via cross cover.

The Senior Leadership Team, as part of the post prioritisation process, has sanctioned approval for the recruitment of podiatrists across HSE South West and these posts are at various stages in the recruitment process. It should be noted however, notwithstanding this approval, the challenges to acquire this expertise is difficult due to the limited pool of qualified candidates in this field. Given the constraints, strategies such as training pathways, additional trainee places and exploration of international recruits are all being evoked to help bridge this gap.

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

Yours sincerely,

Susanne O'Sullivan
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