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

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19th June, 2025

Mr. Pat Buckley T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ ref 32130/25.

"To ask the Minister for Health to address the shortage of services (details supplied) in north Cork as a matter of urgency."

Details supplied: HSE community podiatry service. In North Cork community podiatry, they have one podiatrist covering all North Cork, where there should be six podiatrists covering the area. The one podiatrist is about to go out on Maternity leaving no cover.

Dear Deputy Buckley,

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.

Podiatrists support primary care by providing expertise in foot and ankle health. In addition, podiatrists also take a lead role in supporting people who live with long term conditions that affect the health of the foot and ankle such as arthritis, diabetes, or cardiovascular disease.

There is currently one staff member providing podiatry services across Networks 4 (Mallow, Newmarket, Kanturk, Charleville) and 5 (Fermoy and Mitchelstown). This staff member is due to go on maternity leave at the end of August 2025. As a result, access to podiatry services is determined on the basis of clinical priorities in relation to assessed needs.

I can confirm that approval has been issued to recruit for the backfill of this maternity leave. When this staff member goes on leave, highest priority diabetic clients will be referred to acute services until recruitment and on boarding of the post is completed.

There is also a national recruitment campaign underway nationally via the NRS (National Recruitment Service) for staff grade podiatry posts.

We regret the current status of podiatry services in our networks but continue to review and try to mitigate this situation. As outlined above, the Senior Leadership Team, as part of the post prioritisation process, has sanctioned approval for the recruitment of podiatrists, however it should be noted 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,

Mari O'Donovan
Interim Head of Service - Primary Care,
HSE South West

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