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Date: 19th July 2024

PQ – 24945/24

Deputy Thomas Gould
Dail Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

To ask the Minister for Health the reason services are being removed from MUH if adult beds in CUH may be needed to meet need for these services; and whether consideration has been given to retaining paediatric beds in MUH pending full capacity capability in CUH

Dear Deputy Gould

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 the following outlines the position.

In addition to proudly serving the local population of Cork, we also provide a range of supra-regional services to the southern one third of the Irish population. Indeed 98% of acute paediatric care can be delivered in Cork, without the need to transfer patients and their families to Dublin.

The 2010 HSE reconfiguration of Acute Hospital Services Cork and Kerry recommended that “Paediatric hospital services in Cork city should be centralised at CUH as soon as possible”. CUH is also designated as a regional centre in the 2016 Model of Care from the National Clinical Programme for Paediatrics and Neonatology. Achieving this will deliver higher quality care for children and will provide much needed paediatric care consistent with Clinical Care Pathways and the Model of Care.

In terms of your question about managing the additional activity at CUH once the service transfers, new capacity and investment is being provided to ensure that CUH has the capacity to deliver. CUH has recently opened a new dedicated Children’s Emergency Department which has been designed to physically accommodate the combined activity from both sites once the transfer is completed. This new Children’s Emergency Department is state of the art and provides a safe dedicated space for triaging and treating children. Work is ongoing to ensure that the new children’s

emergency department at CUH is adequate staffed to accommodate this development. We are also in the process of constructing a heli-pad on site at which will further improve access to and the transfer of children in and out of CUH.

In terms of inpatient accommodation on existing children's wards, adjacent non-clinical areas of the hospital at CUH have been converted to add clinical capacity for children. These will include facilities to deliver chemotherapy and infusions at CUH.

Plans to mitigate this potential loss of adult capacity are being developed by the South West Hospital Group.

In terms of parking, this is managed at campus level, with various staff and clinical services moving on and off the campus over time with various service reconfigurations. CUH has recently commenced a park and ride service for staff which has received very positive feedback. There are now 670 park and ride spaces and overall our parking (on and off-site) has had a net increase of 220 spaces in recent months which is more than adequate to accommodate the transfer of the current paediatric service at the Mercy.

Longer term, the government has committed significant additional investment for CUH to build world class facilities for children in the South. Phase 1 of the paediatric capital project at CUH already delivered a new OPD, day unit and academic floors in 2017. Phase 2 and 3 (incorporating completely new inpatient wards and theatres) has planning permission and is due to start construction in 2024, with estimated completion in 2027. This will deliver 82 single inpatient rooms, haematology/oncology unit, paediatric assessment unit, 4 operating theatres, a therapy facility and space for MRI, ultrasound and plain film x-ray. The fully completed CUH Children's Centre will support the centralisation of all paediatric medical and surgical care in the city on one site at CUH in a child and family focused modern facility.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,


Mr. David Donegan
Chief Executive Officer