



Oifig anStiúrthóir
An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta,

Foirgneamh Aibhneacha, Crosbhóthar
Thamhlachta, Tamhlacht,
Baile Átha Cliath D24 XNP2

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Ref: RM/PQ24-45112/24/11/21

21 November 2024

Deputy Pearse Doherty TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ24/45112

To ask the Minister for Health if it is policy for ambulance arrival times not to be shared with callers during emergency calls; if this is the case, the reason for this; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Doherty,

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

Demand via the 999 service has increased by 25% since 2019, with growth in 2024 up by 9% on 2023. The need for additional capacity is a matter of public record https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/committee_of_public_accounts/2021-09-23/3/, whereby it was confirmed by the HSE (CEO and COO) in September 2021, that NAS had a then capacity deficit of 90 emergency ambulance crews daily (1,080 WTE).

The matter was the subject of further public record in February 2023 https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/33/joint_committee_on_health/submissions/2023/2023-02-22_opening-statement-robert-morton-director-national-ambulance-service-nas_en.pdf following the finalisation of a NAS Workforce Plan 2022-2028 in June 2022, underpinned by an independent demand and capacity analysis, which identified the need for considerable growth in the workforce across the country, both now and into the future (2,579 additional WTE by 2028).

Given the scale of the gap between demand and available capacity, situations can and do arise where patients who are not triaged as a life threatening emergency may have to wait while resources are prioritized to higher categories of calls. In this context, 999 callers are not advised of arrival times as emergency ambulances may have to be re-prioritised to competing calls of higher acuity in the same area

I hope you find this information helpful

Yours sincerely

Robert Morton
Director
National Ambulance Service

