



Oifig um Cheannasáí Seirbhíse do Chúram Príomhúil
FSS an Mheán Iarthair
Ascaill Bhaile Chóimín,
Páirc Gnó an Ráithín,
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16th October 2024

Deputy Violet-Anne Wynne
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House,
Kildare St.
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 39434/24 - "To ask the Minister for Health if he will report on the problems facing ShannonDoc; the reason its services are now limited to those living in West Clare; and if he will make a statement on the matter."

Dear Deputy Wynne,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in regard to your parliamentary question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

I note that your office provided further clarification in relation to the problems referenced above as follows: *'significant difficulty local constituents have reported in accessing these services due to the minimal operating hours of the service in West Clare, especially the Kilrush Centre. Constituents have advised Deputy Wynne that with the significant reduction in Kilrush hours, they will travel directly to UHL rather than drive to Miltown Malbay (30 mins in opposite direction) only to be advised to go to UHL anyway'*.

I can advise that the Primary Care Unit (HSE Mid West) forwarded your representation to ShannonDoc for their input in the response. ShannonDoc have confirmed that there has been no change in the level of GP Out of Hours service provided across Co. Clare. ShannonDoc confirmed that they monitor their services on an ongoing basis and they also advised that patients are being seen by ShannonDoc in Kilrush.

ShannonDoc have confirmed the following operating times for the Treatment Centres in Co. Clare:

Location of Treatment Centre	Operating times Mid-Week	Operating times – Weekends & Public Holidays (B/Hs – Bank Holidays, P/Hs – Public Holidays)
Ennis (Core Centre) Primary Care Centre Station Road, Ennis	6 p.m. to 8 a.m.	6 p.m. Friday to 8 a.m. Monday (9 a.m. on B/Hs) 9 a.m. to 8 a.m. P/Hs (incl. Good Friday & Christmas Eve)
Shannon (Regional Centre*) Shannon Health Centre Shannon	6 p.m. to 11 p.m.	9 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Miltown Malbay (Regional Centre*) Medical Centre, Spanish Point Road, Miltown Malbay	6 p.m. to 8 a.m. (Mon-Thurs) 6 p.m. to 9 a.m. (Fri)	7 p.m. Saturday to 9 a.m. Sunday 7 p.m. Sunday to 8 a.m. Monday (9 a.m. B/Hs) 7 p.m. to 8 a.m. (P/Hs)

Kilrush (Regional Centre*) Health Centre, Fahy's Road, Drimna, Kilrush	6 p.m. to 8 a.m. (Mon-Thurs) 6 p.m. to 9 a.m. (Fri)	9 a.m. to 7 p.m. (weekends and P/Hs)
Ennistymon (Regional Centre*) Community Hospital Lahinch Road, Ennistymon	6 p.m. to 8 a.m. (Mon-Thurs) 6 p.m. to 9 a.m. (Fri)	9 a.m. to 7 p.m. (weekends and P/Hs)

**Regional Treatment Centre - there may not be a Doctor onsite at all times, but there is a doctor on duty available to see patients when and if required.*

As previously advised, ShannonDoc introduced an enhanced model of care in March 2020, with the introduction of Mobile Doctors, ensuring that all areas in the Mid West are adequately covered by the urgent Out of Hours GP Service. The ShannonDoc operating model incorporates a team based approach. The team comprises of Doctors, Triage Nurses, Patient Care Administrators and Central Dispatchers who are available Midweek (Monday to Thursday) from 6 p.m. to 8 a.m. with 24 hour cover at Weekends and Public Holidays from 6 p.m. Friday to 8 a.m. Monday. Patients can access the service by calling the Lo-call number 0818 123 500 or 061 459 500.

Every patient will receive a full clinical assessment by the Nurse, free of charge. Under the enhanced model of care, if a Doctor is not present in the Treatment Centre, a Mobile Doctor will be available to patients as required. This means that following triage, the Doctor will come and see patients in the relevant Treatment Centre, carry out a home visit or arrange a virtual consultation as deemed clinically appropriate. In addition, where there are increased demands in certain areas, support teams can be deployed from other locations providing an overall borderless service and ensuring services are provided where most needed. Every single patient that needs to be seen, is seen and, the delivery of quality clinical care remains the priority.

I can advise that the HSE has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place with ShannonDoc. Under the terms of the SLA, the HSE provides an agreed level of funding to ShannonDoc for the provision of Out of Hours GP services (to medical card holders) and ancillary services across the Mid West region (Clare, Limerick & Nth. Tipperary). Under the terms of their SLA, ShannonDoc must ensure that urgent cases have an appointment within two hours of clinical assessment and less urgent cases should have an appointment within six hours of clinical assessment.

The HSE meets with ShannonDoc regularly and holds quarterly meetings to monitor the key performance indicators (KPI's) in line with the SLA. The HSE can confirm that ShannonDoc are fully compliant with their KPI's and the agreed out of hours arrangements.

At our last meeting, ShannonDoc provided details of their activity levels from **January 2024 to August 2024**. I am outlining in the table below, the number of patient contacts managed by ShannonDoc across Co. Clare during the reporting period outlined above:

Treatment Centre	No. of patient contacts Jan-Aug 2024	No. of patient contacts Jan-Aug 2023
Ennis	13,682	11,563
Shannon	1,392	1,103
Ennistymon	814	835
Kilrush	835	829
Miltown Malbay	779	884
Total no. of patient contacts	17,502	15,214

I can advise that if a patient wishes to make a complaint regarding their experience with ShannonDoc, they can email their complaint directly to ShannonDoc on info@shannondoc.ie and ShannonDoc will investigate and address the issues raised.

ShannonDoc provides urgent GP care only and it operates strictly by appointment, it is not a walk-in service. Patients that require emergency services, should continue to contact 999 or 112.

I trust the information above addresses the issues raised in our representation.

Yours sincerely,



Margaret Costello
Head of Service
Primary Care