

General Manager's Office
University Hospital Galway
Newcastle Road
Galway
Tel: (091) 544200

13th September, 2024

REF: PQ 35927/24

RE: To ask the Minister for Health the number of beds that could be freed up in the hospitals in Galway for other use if all those who are inpatients for dialysis and could be equally treated on a day care basis, were facilitated in doing so; the extra resources that would be needed to achieve such an outcome; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Éamon Ó Cuív

Dear Deputy Ó Cuív,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply to you directly in the context of the request for information referenced above.

There is a significant demand on the Dialysis service in Merlin Park University Hospital which is currently providing dialysis to approximately 90 patients / week. There has been a significant increase in demand on the dialysis service over the past 4 years with patient numbers increasing from 63 in 2020 to 90 patients in 2024. Capacity has been increased since Sunday 8th September, 2024 expanding the service to 92 patients

Patients receive dialysis treatment in UHG if they are an inpatient for treatment Medical/surgical and they may be required to continue with their dialysis treatment while an inpatient or if they have acute kidney disease requiring dialysis. Merlin Park is a chronic dialysis unit with patients attending long term as an outpatient. We also link with the Wellstone clinic in relation to their capacity.

In order to meet the increasing demands, two additional isolation rooms have been added to the service and are currently at end stage of commissioning and will be handed over in the coming weeks. This would facilitate an additional 24 sessions. Due to the increase in demand, a contingency was put in place to place 2 surge dialysis treatment chairs onto the unit facilitating an increase of 4 dialysis sessions, 3 days a week and an additional 2 dialysis sessions the other 3 days a week.

Patients normally require 3 dialysis sessions a week however some patients require 4. Additional capacity was built in on a Saturday morning of 6 dialysis session to accommodate these requirements. The additional staffing resources were put in place to accommodate this.

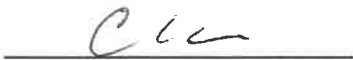
In order to build in additional capacity we are planning for the surge chairs to remain on the unit after the 2 isolation rooms open.

In order to address the surge, the extra capacity is being facilitated by Nursing staff who are working overtime, agency and also short term redeployment of a Home Therapies Nursing staff member. Replacement of existing vacancies are being progressed. In order to deal with future surges, there will be a requirement to secure funding and approval for additional 2.3 staff and keep the two additional chairs as surge capacity once the two isolation rooms are complete. This will be submitted as a business cases to the Saolta Group for consideration.

We endeavour to ensure all patients are facilitated for their dialysis on an ongoing basis with patient safety a priority.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Kane
General Manager
Galway University Hospitals