

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

15 extra beds by 2035 for acute mental health patients in Galway is too little at too slow a pace - Dep John Connolly

A timeline of 15 extra beds for acute mental health patients in Galway is welcome news, but a timeline of by 2035 is far too slow a timeframe.

This is the view of Fianna Fáil Galway West TD, John Connolly. In the Dáil, he raised the issue of increasing the number of beds in acute mental health wards in hospitals across the CHO2 area, covering Galway, Mayo, and Roscommon.

In a response from the HSE's Mental Health Services - Community Healthcare West division, Dep Connolly was informed that discussions on this have taken place between the HSE and Health Planners.

The discussions have been on "future proofing" increasing the number of beds in the unit by 15 - from the current total of 50 to 75. However, this is planned to be done "by 2035" - up to a decade away.

Dep Connolly was informed by the HSE that "this has not currently been formally requested by services to the IHA manager and is only at feasibility stage at the moment."

"That the HSE is looking to increase the number of beds for patients with acute mental health issues is welcome," said Dep Connolly, "but the idea of waiting for 2035 for a mere 15 beds is too little a quantity at too slow a pace.

"A greater number of beds for AMH patients will greatly alleviate pressure on an already overburdened A&E, so patients can be diverted to the services they need. As a result, I am calling on the HSE to urgently look at how it can process this proposal and make it a reality much faster."

Dep Connolly has previously raised the issue of access to the Acute Mental Facility within University Hospital Galway with the Taoiseach and Minister for Mental Health. "We have an obligation to ensure that appropriate and sufficient care is available when needed. In-patient care is an important part of the care provision and I would like to see the HSE expedite this plan for additional acute beds."

ENDS

For more information or to arrange an interview with Dep John Connolly on this issue, contact: 087 - 9032345