



MID-WESTERN
HEALTH BOARD

28/4/03

**To: Chairman & Each Member
Mid-Western Health Board**

**Report No: 24/03
Item No 8 on Agenda**

Report for Meeting of the Board to be held on Friday, 9th May, 2003

**Implementation of General Practitioner Co-operative
Out-of-Hours arrangements.**

Dear Member,

The Department of Health has informed the Board that an amount of €734,237 is being made available in 2003 in respect of the expansion of General Practitioner co-operative out-of-hours arrangements.

This allocation includes a once-off capital amount of €139,475. This amount is being provided to enable an expansion of the services provided by Shannondoc Co-operative in partnership with the Health Board to the Limerick area.

Previous reports to the Board outlined the developments of the G.P. co-operative out-of-hours arrangements in County Clare and North Tipperary. The Health Board submitted a comprehensive proposal to the Department of Health for resources amounting to €1.296m for the roll-out of the service to Limerick City and County. The funding that has been provided will enable a very significant expansion of the existing service. Discussions are currently underway with Shannondoc to agree the details of the expansion programme for the Limerick area in 2003.

Shannondoc Ltd. was formally launched in November, 2001 to provide out-of-hours family doctor services to patients in the Mid-West region. The Board of Shannondoc consists of G.P. Directors drawn from the three catchment areas of the Board and Shannondoc represents the majority of General Practitioners in the region.

Services were developed in Clare with effect from June, 2002 and in North Tipperary from October, 2002.

A regional Central Call Centre has been developed at St. Camillus' Hospital, Limerick which will have a capacity to service the region and work is under way in developing the necessary infrastructure to allow for expansion into the Limerick area.

The general public access the out-of-hours through a low-cost telephone number to the central call centre. Calls are initially logged on the computerised patient call management system. Calls are then transferred as appropriate to a member of the Nurse Triage team on duty. The Triage Nurse provides an advice service and/or arranges for the patients to be seen by a Doctor on duty. To date a significant proportion of enquiries are resolved satisfactorily by the Triage Nurses and do not require further intervention by the Doctors. The Calls Centre, where necessary, directs calls to available doctors at out-of-hours treatment centres located strategically throughout the region. The call management system records and tracks all patients' calls.

For the purposes of organising out-of-hours arrangements, the region is divided into four operating zones, namely Clare, North Tipperary, Limerick County (rural) and Limerick City (Urban). The operating zones of Clare and North Tipperary are subdivided into the following operating cells.

Clare

Operating Cells **Treatment Centres**

North/West Clare	Ennistymon
	Kilrush
	Miltown Malbay
Mid/South Clare	Ennis
	Shannon

North Tipperary

Operating Cells **Treatment Centres**

Thurles	Thurles
Nenagh	Nenagh
Roscrea	Roscrea

The following is a breakdown of activity over the period from June, 2002 to April, 2003.

Calls per Duty Station:

Clare	Ennis	6,315	23%
	Ennistymon	2,488	9%
	Kilrush	2,419	8.5%
	Miltown Malbay	398	1%
	Shannon	3,124	11%
North Tipperary	Nenagh	3,258	12%
	Roscrea	2,519	9%
	Thurles	2,468	8.5%
Central Call Centre	Call Centre	5,055	18%
Total		28,044	

The following is a breakdown of activity over the period from June, 2002 to April, 2003.

<u>Call Type</u>	<u>Total</u>	
Nurse Triage	5,008	17.85%
Call Answering	47	0.16%
Doctor Advice	2,835	10.10%
Treatment Centre	17,066	60.85%
Home Visits	3,088	11.04%
Total	28,044	

The existing service in Clare and North Tipperary is being monitored by the Board in consultation with Shannondoc to ensure effective implementation and delivery of service. The results of recent patient satisfaction surveys carried out indicate the high level of satisfaction among patients with the out-of hours arrangements. Outlined below are the results of a random survey of persons making contact with the service.

Patient Satisfaction:

	Sent	Returned	% Returned	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Clare	98	46	46.9%	36	9	3	1
July '02				76.6%	19.1%	6.4%	2.1%
Clare	118	54	45.8%	37	12	3	2
Aug '02				78.7%	25.5%	6.4%	4.3%
Clare	112	47	42.0%	32	12	3	0
Dec '02				68.1%	25.5%	6.4%	0.0%
Tipperary	91	33	36.3%	22	8	2	1
Dec '02				66.7%	24.2%	6.1%	3.0%
Clare	97	50	51.5%	39	9	2	0
Jan '03				78.0%	18.0%	4.0%	0.0%
Tipperary	99	41	41.4%	30	8	2	1
Jan '03				73.2%	19.5%	4.9%	2.4%
Total	615	271	44.1%	196	58	15	5
				72.3%	21.4%	5.5%	1.8%

This allocation will enable a significant expansion of the service to the Limerick area.

Further reports will be presented to the Board, as the service develops.

Yours sincerely

G. CROWLEY
ASST CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER.