

2017.06.20

**3.5. Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding notifications to Family Nursing and Home Care clients in respect of the arrangements for home care provision: [1(365)]**

Will the Minister inform Members how many Family Nursing and Home Care clients, if any, have been given 2 weeks' notice, or less, of the need to make alternative arrangements for home care provision, following any cessation of Family Nursing and Home Care's service owing to a loss of staff caused by contractual changes?

**Senator A.K.F. Green (The Minister for Health and Social Services):**

My department continues to work in collaboration with Family Nursing and Home Care to ensure that all patients remain safe and receive the care that they need. This is our top priority and because of that one of my officers is currently based at Le Bas Centre to support family nursing to ensure this is the case. At the current time, 12 patients, all of whom had shared care packages between Family Nursing and Home Care and another provider have been transferred totally to that other provider already known to the patient to support continuity of care. The total number of patients who will require their care to be transferred to an alternative provider depends on the number of staff who commit to remain working with Family Nursing under the new terms and conditions, and staff have up to the end of their notice period, 25th June, to decide whether they wish to have a revised contract or not.

**3.5.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Does the Minister consider that 2 weeks' notice or less is satisfactory and will he accept responsibility for the actions of this agency on which he has responsibility to treat its clients in a proper manner and does he accept that responsibility?

**Senator A.K.F. Green:**

I do accept responsibility for supporting patients and ensuring that they are safe and secure. It is a shared responsibility with Family Nursing. In the case of the patients so far, they had shared care before. They have now, within 15 minutes of being asked, transferred entirely to the other provider. Family Nursing will continue with service as usual. They are still running district nursing, health visiting, rapid response, reablement and Children's Services.

**3.5.2 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

For the difficulties that this has caused some people who receive care, for the stress that this has caused some of these people, and the worry that their families are facing because of this, would the Minister like to apologise seeing that ultimately this is his fault?

**Senator A.K.F. Green:**

I am quite happy to apologise for people who spread fear and that is why ...

**Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Shame, shame on you. Shame on you, that is lies.

**Senator A.K.F. Green:**

... I have had to put a member of staff ... I have had to put a member of staff down in Family Nursing to ensure the safety of all patients.

**3.5.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Shame on this Minister for what he just said. We are getting people approaching us because of the problems they are facing, because of the decisions that have been made by this Minister. Would he care to take his head out of the sand for just one moment and appreciate the problems he is causing vulnerable people in our society and maybe have the humility to express a little bit of regret because of the stress and upheaval he is putting these vulnerable people through? Would he be prepared to do that?

**Senator A.K.F. Green:**

I am prepared to acknowledge that change is difficult for vulnerable people. I have worked with vulnerable people for many, many years and that is why we have a member of staff working with Family Nursing to ensure that that change goes as smoothly as possible and that patients are at all times safe.

**3.5.4 Deputy M. Tadier:**

Is the Minister aware of a case of one individual who went into hospital and she could not actually leave hospital when she should have done, when she was ready to go home, because her care package had been withdrawn?

**Senator A.K.F. Green:**

No, I am not, but if the Deputy would like to give me the information I am happy to look at it.

**3.5.5 Deputy M. Tadier:**

Does the Minister accept that these are instances of clearly unintended consequences of a policy that he is pursuing? It is not an isolated case. Would the Minister reconsider whether what he is proposing and allowing to happen with Family Nursing and Home Care is in the best interests of the users and of the staff, and indeed in the public interest generally?

**Senator A.K.F. Green:**

Family Nursing and Home Care do an excellent job but there are also 20 other providers doing the same sort of work. There is facility out there for people to get the care and support they need and I have a member of staff making sure that that is happening.

**3.5.6 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Will the Minister inform Members now how long he has known that he was going to withdraw support for Family Nursing and Home Care Services? How long Family Nursing and Home Care Services have known that they were going to lay off or change the terms and conditions of their staff? How much notice has been given previously to this particular week of the withdrawal of services, full stop? Is the Minister ...

**The Bailiff:**

No, that is 3 questions. Three questions are enough, Deputy.

**Senator A.K.F. Green:**

From what I understand, I will try and remember all the questions as they came. These discussions have been going on with Family Nursing in excess of 3 years. I have known personally for around a year that this change would need to come in and discussed that directly with the board myself. I am sorry, I cannot remember the other questions if the Deputy would like to ask them again.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

It is the most critical one. When did the clients, when were the clients informed either by phone or by letter that their service was being withdrawn at the end of this week?

**Senator A.K.F. Green:**

There was no intention to withdraw the service. The clients were informed some months ago that there was going to be a change and that there would be a new facility available through long-term care if they were eligible, and that we would protect them until that either came in or until such time as it was clear they were not eligible. So that has been a number of months.