

21.07.19

9 Deputy M.R. Higgins of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the refusal to release the report on the hospital failings: (OQ.157/2021)

Following a recent Public Accounts Committee hearing at which it was stated that a performance report for his department had not been published, will the Minister explain the grounds on which the report has been withheld?

The Deputy of St. Ouen (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

I am pleased to have the opportunity to answer this question because, as Minister, I have always had the intention of making information about Health and Community Services and their related performance available to Islanders as that supports an open and transparent culture while ensuring that Islanders have access to health and social care performance data in a reliable and understandable manner. The report has not been withheld, as the question might suggest, as it has been presented at the public H.C.S. board meetings in the past. However, it is important that data is presented with relevant background information and within the clinical and operational context to ensure information is interpreted correctly. This is easier to achieve with a verbal presentation in a board meeting than in a published report on a website. That is why we have not yet been able to publish it. Due to legacy processes and multifaceted I.T. (information technology) systems, including the continued existence of paper-based systems, data is difficult to retrieve and to validate. The report is produced by the Health Informatics team, who continuously work in validating data with clinicians and establish the processes to report. It is very much a work in process and is updated monthly but continuous work is required to ensure that the data in it is validated and useful for Islanders. The next report will be presented at the public H.C.S. board meeting on 9th August and it is my intention to publish the information that is validated, and all future reports, on the gov.je website so that by next year we will have our full performance report on the website and Islanders can measure how we are achieving.

[16:15]

4.9.1 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

I welcome what the Minister has said about openness and transparency and definitely hope that the information will be published on 6th August because would the Minister not accept that by not doing so, and the way this matter has been handled, you have shot yourselves in the foot and the public are already suspicious of data coming from the Health Department and some of the policies. Therefore it has just added to the overall suspicion of the department.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

What was said in the public meeting was well-intentioned because it is about validating the data in an understandable way. Because we all know when we see professional documents that they can be written in a way that the professionals can understand but could be confusing for those of us who are not within that profession. We want this to be a useful document and understandable and something that can be used by members of the public to have confidence in Health and Community Services. This information was simply not available when I came into office. Information of this nature was scant and was certainly not collated in any sort of document which might have been made public. So much has happened over the last 3 years to draw this together under the management that we have who were told impetus is about a pathway of improvement and transparency in a clinically-led organisation. You will see the remarkable change and States

Members will be able to question me directly on data that is on the website, rather than having to ask about it all the time.

4.9.2 Senator T.A. Vallois:

I thank the Minister for his answers as a member of P.A.C. (Public Accounts Committee), but can I ask what consideration the Minister is giving to having performance reports from G.P.s to identify the difference between primary and secondary care and ensuring that the future of the Jersey Care Model is the right way to go forward for Jersey?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

That I believe is an excellent question. That is the sort of work that will be developed with the G.P.s and our partner organisations within the Care Model work because it is right that all those offering care services in the Island should be accountable for their work and should publish their performance data, we should know the standards by which they are operating. That is not clear at the moment. That work needs to be done but it is flagged up and it will be done as the Jersey Care Model work progresses.

4.9.3 Senator T.A. Vallois:

I just wanted to ask the Minister to give some assurance and a timeline for performance reports for G.P.s to compare and contrast please.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I do not think I can give a timeline at the moment because the initial work to plot the changes in the Jersey Care Model is a 4-year programme. We are working with the G.P.s to plot that but there is not a precise timeline at the moment, but I can assure the Senator that that work is envisaged and will form part of discussions.

4.9.4 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Will the Minister also agree to publish data of negligence claims against the hospital service and the health service generally, where the States are being sued, and give indications of what the reasons are for it and the sums being sought or remedy being sought?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

That is a very specific question and I would need to take legal advice on how much of that could be disclosed prior to any decision being reached on those claims. What I have seen is that data can be released and is intended to be released on the complaints received by H.C.S., how they are dealt with, times in which they are dealt with, whether they are satisfactorily dealt with, so that I can say ... I cannot give a precise answer, and I trust the Deputy will understand, because I need to take specific advice in relation to legal claims.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

I shall ask in the future, thank you.