

## Connacht Tribune

Tim Ryan, Oireachtas Correspondent

### Minor injuries unit sought for UHG

University Hospital Galway is one of the busiest hospitals in the country with ever-increasing waiting lists and growing numbers spending nights on trolleys in the corridors of the emergency department, Independent Deputy Noel Grealish told the Dáil. All of these people would benefit from a minor injuries unit, he said. If funding were allocated, it could be up and running next year.

“I know from a visit to the emergency department at University Hospital Galway that patients sitting in the waiting room for hours on end face a screen that pops up with a message advising them to use their local minor injury unit as a speedy alternative to the emergency department,” he said. “It is good advice, but for the fact that Galway is the only major urban area in the country that actually does not have such a unit.”

More than 60,000 people every year are crowding into the cramped and outdated emergency department at University Hospital Galway, he said. Three quarters of them are discharged after being seen and treated without being admitted to hospital. Most of the 45,000-plus people would benefit from the availability of the option to go to a minor injuries unit where they could be seen and treated in a fraction of the time it takes today.

In response, Tánaiste Simon Coveney said approval was given in May 2017 to the Saolta University Health Care Group, which oversees the hospital system in the west and north west of the country, to conduct an options appraisal for future acute hospital needs in Galway.

“As part of the options appraisal the Saolta group will undertake a medium-term planning project to assess the population health needs for the hospital catchment area to inform existing and future service needs,” he said. “The assessment will provide an options appraisal for the infrastructural requirements needed in Galway to facilitate the delivery of safe high-quality timely acute elective and cancer care for patients throughout the west and north west. This assessment will outline a comprehensive plan to address requirements for unscheduled and scheduled cancer and maternity-paediatric care, including key enabling diagnostic and support functions. The new emergency department block envisaged under *Project Ireland 2040* will also be considered in the context of the options appraisal.”