

18th October 2017

IAEM Lauds Resilience of Emergency Service staff during Storm Ophelia

The pictures of the devastation wreaked, particularly on the South, East and West of the country, give some indication of the difficulties frontline staff who provide pre-hospital and Emergency Medicine services in Ireland had to overcome just to get to work and be available to serve the public on their usual 24/7 basis. In spite of the severity of the weather, not seen for half a century, all 29 of the country's Emergency Departments (EDs) remained open and functional during the storm. We commend the nursing, medical and support staff staffing EDs for their commitment to duty.

While many EDs were quieter than usual, as the overwhelming majority of the public had heeded the advice and stayed at home, other EDs had to care for patients whose injuries were sustained as a direct result of the storm. Inevitably, there were fewer attendances to EDs on the day of the week (Monday) EDs are typically at their busiest. Therefore many of these patients will need to be seen and treated over the next few days. We would ask patients therefore to be aware that their waits for treatment may be longer as a result of the fact that departments will be busier for the rest of the week.

While all those who need emergency care will be treated as quickly as possible, clearly patients with more minor conditions may have to wait for longer than might normally be the case. Furthermore, as many patients who were due to be discharged from hospitals earlier this week were not able to leave hospital because of the absence of transport and the treacherous road conditions, many hospitals are even more crowded than usual. This will result in longer delays for those patients seen in EDs who require hospital admission in actually securing a hospital bed which in turn will increase the delay for other patients.

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