

**Minutes of the Regional Health Forum, Dublin – Mid Leinster meeting held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2012 at the Boardroom, HSE Dublin – Mid Leinster Offices, Block 4, Central Business Park, Clonminch, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.**

**Present:**

Cllr. P. Burke (Chairperson)	Cllr. P. Belton
Cllr. V. Blake	Cllr. G. Brady
Cllr. T. Cullen	Cllr. A. Davitt
Cllr. M. Devine	Cllr. J. Dillon Byrne
Cllr. M. Dollard	Cllr. P. Doran
Cllr. M. Duff	Cllr. T. Fox
Cllr. P. Hand	Cllr. G. Horkan
Cllr. C. King	Cllr. S. Langan
Cllr. B. Lawlor	Cllr. D. Mitchell
Cllr. T. McKeigue	Cllr. D. O'Callaghan
Cllr. G. O'Connell	Cllr. F. O'Loughlin
Cllr. P. Ormond	Cllr. P. J. Reilly

**Apologies:**

Cllr. C. NiDhalaigh  
Cllr. M. Parodi  
Cllr. V. Jackson

**In attendance:**

Mr. John Cregan, Director RHO, Dublin – Mid Leinster  
Mr. Gerry O'Dwyer, Regional Director of Operations, Dublin-Mid Leinster  
Mr. Gerry O'Neill, Integrated Services Area Manager  
Mr. David Walsh, Area Manager, HSE Dublin South West/Kildare/West Wicklow  
Ms. Arlene Creane, Communications, HSE, Dublin – Mid Leinster

12:05:01 Adoption of minutes of the seventh Annual Meeting of the Regional Health Forum, Dublin – Mid Leinster held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2012

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Dillon Byrne, seconded by Cllr. G. O'Connell, the minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2012 were adopted.

12:05:02 Chairperson's Correspondence

Cllr. P. Burke advised members that resignations had been received from Cllr. Cathal King and Cllr. Tony Delaney.

Cllr. Peter Burke Chairperson, on behalf of members of the Forum, extended sympathy to Cllr. K. O'Brien on the death of her mother and to Ms. Dymphna Bracken on the death of her mother. Members, as a mark of respect, observed a minutes silence.

Cllr. A. Davitt proposed the suspension of Standing Orders in order to discuss recent announcement of budgetary restrictions by the HSE. Following discussion, it was agreed that this item would be discussed after agenda items has been dealt with by the meeting.

12:05:03 Future Role of Regional Health Forums

Cllr. Peter Burke updated members regarding the future role of Regional Health Forums, and he highlighted the following points:

- The former Chairman of this Forum and the Chairpersons of the other Forums met with Dr. James Reilly, Minister for Health on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2012.
- Forum members agreed that the Forum would further discuss its future role in context of overall restructuring of the health system at the September 2012 Forum meeting.
- The Minister indicated that he would discuss the wider local government reform with the Minister for Environment with a view to seeing how the health and local government reforms could dovetail.
- The Minister published the Health Service Executive (Governance) Bill in July 2012.
- This legislation will facilitate the putting in place of a HSE Director General and six new Directorates, closely aligned to specific areas of service such as primary care, mental health, hospitals and other services.
- The Bill will specifically:
  - abolish the Board structure of the HSE and provide for a Directorate to be the new governing body for the HSE in place of the Board, headed by a Director General;
  - provide for further accountability arrangements for the HSE; and
  - provide for a number of technical amendments
- The legal status of the HSE under the Health Act 2004 does not change under the Bill.
- HSE employees will remain the employees of the HSE and no changes are made to the existing Forum arrangements under the Bill.

- The HSE will continue to have responsibility for the organisation and delivery of health services but the new Directorate will be accountable to the Minister for the performance of HSE functions.
- The Directorate is a transitional, interim move and the HSE will eventually no longer exist.
- HSE functions move elsewhere but this will take careful planning and sequencing and further legislation.
- Members were requested to note the timetable for the abolition of the HSE.
- The HSE Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Cathal Magee resigned.
- Mr. Tony O'Brien formally took up appointment as Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the HSE and, when the Health Service Executive (Governance) Bill 2012 is passed by the Oireachtas in Autumn 2012, assume the position of Director General.
- The Minister announced the establishment of some Hospital Groups and new management arrangements for two groups of hospitals in the West and Mid West.
- Dr. Ambrose McLoughlin was appointed as the new Secretary General in the Department of Health earlier in 2012.
- By way of information, the documentation circulated to the meeting included a summary of the Programme for Government Commitments relating to the Health Sector.

The Chairman stated that this meeting provided an opportunity for all members to state their views as to how the Forums should develop or change in the context of the wider health and local government reforms. He stressed that he wanted to be in a position to submit members views as part of an overall submission by the Four Forums to the Minister.

Cllr. D. O'Callaghan advised members that as the former Chairperson of the Regional Health Forum Dublin-Mid Leinster he felt that the meeting with the Minister had been very positive and also stated that it is now a priority that members submit suggestions in relation to the future role of Forums in order to make a submission to the Minister.

Extensive discussions took place regarding the future of the forum and members raised the following:

- the importance of the role of local public representation in relation to health matters

- the quality of local information provided to the Forum
- the need for the Forum to have input regarding budgets
- the possibility of smaller and more local Forums

Cllr. Peter Burke stated that a meeting was to be arranged with the three other Chairpersons in October 2012 and that the views of this Forum should be crystallised before that meeting. Cllr. Burke invited members to submit views regarding the future role of Forum members and, following further discussion, it was agreed that the Regional Health Office would invite members to submit views. It was further agreed, as it was likely that the various political groups would have different view, it would be useful if each group would prepare its submission in advance of the Forum Joint Committees meeting to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2012. It was also noted that it remains open to any member to submit his/her views to the Chair by email ([rho@hse.ie](mailto:rho@hse.ie)). It is hoped that it will be possible to finalise the Forum's position at the next Joint Committee meeting.

12:05:04 HSE Update: Surgical Programme

The above item was deferred to a future meeting of the Regional Health Forum.

#### **Any Other Business**

Cllr. A. Davitt requested a discussion regarding recent budgetary restrictions announced by the HSE, in particular regarding home care for the elderly.

Mr. David Walsh stated that a reduction of 4.5% in home help services has been included in Service Plan 2012, resulting in a reduction of 100,000 hours for the year. Mr. Walsh also stated that no current recipient of home help service who has an assessed need for the service will have it fully withdrawn.

Cllr. M. Dollard requested information regarding services provided to patients with coeliac disease. Mr. G. O'Dwyer stated that he will discuss details with Cllr. Dollard.

Cllr. P.J. Reilly stated that it was brought to his attention no new applications for home help hours are being accepted in the Longford area. Mr. D. Walsh stated that the HSE is still accepting new applications for Home help hours and that reduction in services needs to be managed against demand but agreed to check the situation in Longford and revert to Cllr. Reilly.

Cllr. S. Langan expressed concerns regarding services in Dernturn and Mr. D. Walsh agreed to discuss services with Cllr. Langan.

Cllr. P. Doran requested an update regarding ambulance services in Baltinglass. In response, Mr. G. O'Dwyer stated that he would arrange for Mr. Martin Dunne, HSE Ambulance services to contact Cllr. Doran regarding ambulance services in Baltinglass.

Cllr. King, on behalf of Cllr. C. NiDhalaigh requested an update on Inchicore Nursing Home. Mr. David Walsh stated that he will revert to Cllr. NiDhalaigh in this regard.

Following further discussion, it was agreed that an update regarding budgetary restrictions will be provided to members at its next meeting.

Mr. G. O'Dwyer and Mr. Walsh updated members on a programme for frail elderly.

By way of information to members, Mr. G. O'Dwyer informed the meeting that the National Rehabilitation Hospital has opened 10 extra beds; that approval has been received for the recruitment of a Consultant in Rehab Medicine for the Dublin-Mid Leinster area; and, also, that the recruitment process for a Consultant in Elderly Care would commence in the near future.

**12:05:05**

### **Motions**

That this Forum write to the Minister for Health Dr. James Reilly requesting that all patients with cancer and motor neurone disease be automatically entitled to a medical card to cover all the cost of their medical treatments.

**Cllr. P.J. Reilly, Cllr. G. Brady,  
Cllr. P. Belton**

Members noted the above motion.

### **Motion 2.**

In view of the recent published study into links between cardiovascular disease and shift work, that the HSE provide a report with a view to educating these workers regarding risks and detection.

**Cllr. M. Devine and Cllr. C. King**

A report on this motion was prepared by Dr. Phil Jennings, Director of Public Health, HSE. Members noted the report.

**Motion 3**

That the HSE give an update on the status of the Catering Department at the Midland Regional Hospital, Portlaoise to include whether there is a move or outsourcing of catering of food planned in the future.

**Cllr. K. O'Brien and Cllr. W. Aird**

This motion was not moved as Cllrs. O'Brien and Aird were not in attendance.

12:05:06      Questions

Responses to questions submitted were circulated to members.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cllr. Peter Burke  
Chairperson  
Regional Health Forum  
Dublin – Mid Leinster

Date: \_\_\_\_\_