

REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM - DUBLIN NORTH EAST

FÓRAM RÉIGIÚNACH SLÁINTE - BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH AGUS AN TÓIRTHUAISCEART

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 25TH NOVEMBER, 2013 AT 2:00PM

IN THE BOARDROOM, HSE, BECTIVE STREET, KELLS

Members Present

Cllr. Christy Burke
Cllr. Tommy Byrne
Cllr. William Carey
Cllr. Pat Crimmins
Cllr. Kieran Dennison
Cllr. Anne Devitt
Cllr. Ann Dillon-Gallagher

Cllr. Anthony Donohoe
Cllr. Robbie Gallagher
Cllr. Nick Killian
Cllr. Eithne Loftus
Cllr. Colm Markey
Cllr. David Maxwell
Cllr. Paddy McDonald

Cllr. Gerry McGuire
Cllr. Brian McKenna
Cllr. Mags Murray
Cllr. Patrick O'Reilly
Cllr. Bill Tormey

Not in Attendance

Cllr. Oliver Fox
Cllr. Séamas McGrattan
Cllr. Lucy McRoberts

Cllr. Gerry Murray
Cllr. Michael O'Dowd
Cllr. Larry O'Toole

Cllr. Joe Reilly

Apologies

Cllr. John Redmond

Officials Present

Ms. Rosaleen Harlin, Lead Manager, Regional Health Office - HSE DNE
Ms. Angela Fitzgerald, Regional Director for Performance and Integration, HSE DNE
Dr. Nazih Eldin, Head of Health Promotion - HSE DNE
Mr. Paul Gallen, Operations Performance Manager, National Ambulance Service
Ms. Katherine Kellett, Regional Health Office - HSE DNE
Ms. Lorraine Timmons, Regional Health Office - HSE DNE
Ms. Ann Martin, Press Officer, Communications - HSE DNE

1. Adoption of minutes of meeting held on Monday, 23rd September, 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 23rd September, 2013 were adopted by the Forum on the proposal of Cllr. Brian McKenna and seconded by Cllr. Ann Dillon-Gallagher.

Following discussion at the October Forum Committee meeting, Mr. Paul Gallen, Operations Performance Manager, National Ambulance Service gave a report to the meeting on Ambulance Services in the region (copy appended to the official minute).

Members thanked Mr. Gallen for his report and a discussion took place where members raised the following issues:-

- Reports of a call from County Monaghan where it took over three hours for the ambulance to arrive on site having allegedly been in Dundalk for approximately two hours;
- Request for further clarification on ambulance response time targets;
- Statistics in relation to achieving targets;
- Reported incident of ambulance taking 29 minutes to arrive at hotel in Navan;
- Report of ambulance call to a minor heart attack at Ratoath where 27 minutes passed before an ambulance arrived. Subsequently, two ambulances and a car attended;
- Dissatisfaction among ambulance staff;
- Clarification in relation to Dublin ambulance service;
- Procedure followed from an ambulance call;
- Request for county by county breakdown of ambulance response times;
- Absenteeism rates among ambulance personnel;
- Clarification in relation to Intermediate Care Service vehicles;
- Locations of inter hospital transfer vehicles;
- Costs associated with ambulance vehicles;
- Report of an ambulance from Mayo travelling to Dublin to transport a patient from the Mater private to the Mater public;
- Requirement for sheltered hospital entrances for ambulances;
- Concern in relation to lack of ambulance cover in Virginia on Saturdays;
- Utilisation of air ambulance.

Mr. Gallen and senior management responded to the questions and comments from the members as follows:-

- Issue of ambulance call taking three hours to arrive at destination in Monaghan will be examined and a response will be circulated to members;
- There are two main response target times for life threatening (Echo) or potentially life threatening (Delta) incidents. The recommended response time for Echo/Delta calls is eight minutes with a first responder and 19 minutes for an emergency carrying vehicle and for all other calls it is 19 minutes;
- The national target set for responding to calls is 75%. According to July statistics, 52.94% of Echo calls were within the eight minute target and 62.94% of Delta calls were within targets;
- In relation to the Navan hotel incident, a call came in to the Control Centre at 23.01 hours. The first ambulance arrived on site at 23.33 hours. Further clarification will issue to members;

- Where a cardiac arrest occurs, it is protocol to dispatch at least two ambulances;
- The NAS operate an open door policy for staff in relation to their concerns. Dissatisfaction may be a result of recent changes to rosters, pay reductions, budget restrictions, cuts to overtime, etc.;
- Dublin Fire Brigade are contracted by the HSE and operate within Dublin city centre and North Dublin;
- A call is received in the Control Centre and following a list of questions is appropriately triaged. The nearest appropriate resource is then dispatched within 90 seconds of receiving the call. In the majority of instances, an ambulance and/or a car will be dispatched with a paramedic or advanced paramedic. The Control Centre monitors all ambulance vehicles in the region on a constant basis and dispatches resources as required. Forthcoming new technology will further enhance this system;
- Separate county statistics are difficult and time consuming to prepare at present. However, statistics such as these will be readily available with the introduction of new ICT systems;
- The rate of absenteeism has dropped recently from 13% to 5.4%. The HSE national target is 3.5%;
- Intermediate Care Service vehicles provide transport for patients between hospitals and other medical facilities. This reduces the reliance on emergency ambulances ensuring they are available to respond to emergency situations. The NAS has recently introduced a new ICV service in Ardee and has also enhanced the service in Cavan with additional resources;
- The NAS has two Rapid Response Vehicles (RRV) in the North East, one in Ardee and one in Trim. Dublin locations are St. James's Hospital and Cherry Orchard Hospital;
- A new ambulance costs approximately €180,000;
- If the NAS has an ambulance in Dublin from another region waiting on a patient that resource will be utilised during the waiting period;
- The issue of sheltered hospital entrances was noted;
- An ambulance is operational seven nights per week in Virginia. Rosters all compliment each other so an ambulance from another area will move in;
- The air ambulance is not a primary response but is utilised in North Leinster area. It is a national response resource.

During the course of the meeting the following issues were raised by members:-

- Completion date for Enfield Health Centre and parking provision;
- Medical Card and Drugs Payment Card entitlement;
- GPs charging for blood tests;
- Clarification on Discretionary Medical Cards.

Ms. Angela Fitzgerald responded as follows:-

- A response will issue in relation to Enfield Health Centre;
- The general population are entitled to Drugs Payment Card where there is a set threshold on prescription charges. However, Medical Card entitlement is means based;
- As per the GMS contract GPs are not legally obliged to take bloods free of charge. It is at the discretion of each individual GP to decide on charging. However, a public patient can not be charged for blood tests while in hospital;
- Clarification on Discretionary Medical Cards will issue to members;

2. Health Service Executive Updates

A report was circulated to the meeting which dealt with the following:-

- Opening of the Blanchardstown Primary Care Centre;
- Temporary relocation of the Emergency Department, Our Lady's Hospital, Navan;
- Cavan General Hospital wins Radiography Department 2013;
- Reports by the National Review Panel for Serious Incidents and Child Deaths;
- Irish Hospice Foundation signs Collaborative Agreement with HSE;
- HSE warns of increase in Gonorrhoea infections;
- Staff from Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital host information event to raise awareness of COPD;
- Protected meal times for patients at Cavan General Hospital;
- School kids get the microbe message with HSE and Science Week competition;
- Ardee public information event encourages safety in the home;
- Antibiotic Awareness – Keeping antibiotics effective is everyone's responsibility;
- Christmas Message.

3. Presentation on 'Healthy Habits for Healthy Families'

It was agreed to defer this item to the January 2014 meeting of the Forum.

4. Motions

The response to the Motion was circulated and noted.

5. Questions

The responses to the Questions were circulated and noted.

6. Report by Chairperson of Committee.

The report was noted.

7. Chairperson's Correspondence

There was no business under this item.

8. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of the Regional Health Forum - Dublin North East will take place on Monday, 27th January, 2014 at 2:00pm.

Signed:

Bill Tormey,
Chairperson.