

REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM - DUBLIN NORTH EAST

FÓRAM RÉIGIÚNACH SLÁINTE - BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH AGUS AN TÓIRTHUAISCEART

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 27TH JANUARY, 2014 AT 2:00PM

IN THE BOARDROOM, HSE, BECTIVE STREET, KELLS

Members Present

Cllr. Christy Burke	Cllr. Robbie Gallagher	Cllr. Brian McKenna
Cllr. Tommy Byrne	Cllr. Nick Killian	Cllr. Gerry Murray
Cllr. William Carey	Cllr. Eithne Loftus	Cllr. Mags Murray
Cllr. Pat Crimmins	Cllr. Grainne Maguire	Cllr. Patrick O'Reilly
Cllr. Kieran Dennison	Cllr. Colm Markey	Cllr. John Redmond
Cllr. Ann Dillon-Gallagher	Cllr. David Maxwell	Cllr. Bill Tormey
Cllr. Anthony Donohoe	Cllr. Paddy McDonald	
Cllr. Oliver Fox	Cllr. Séamas McGrattan	

Not in Attendance

Cllr. Anne Devitt	Cllr. Lucy McRoberts	Cllr. Larry O'Toole
Cllr. Gerry McGuire	Cllr. Michael O'Dowd	Cllr. Joe Reilly

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. William Merriman, Area Operations Manager - NAS North Leinster & NAS South
Mr. Paul Gallen, Operations Performance Manager, National Ambulance Service
Ms. Rosarii Mannion, Assistant National Director of HR, HSE DNE
Mr. Robert Kidd, Regional Business Manager, Office of the RDPI
Ms. Katherine Kellett, Regional Health Office - HSE DNE
Ms. Lorraine Timmons, Regional Health Office - HSE DNE
Ms. Ann Martin, Press Officer, Communications - HSE DNE

At the outset of the meeting, members raised the following matters:-

- Recent media reports in relation to the Rehab Group where the charity stated that the HSE had not asked the right questions in relation to the pay of their Chief Executive;
- Clarification in relation to the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) and waiting list times where patients may be in difficult situations at home and their condition may have deteriorated or be terminal by the time they are seen by a consultant;
- Transfer of patients from Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda to Newry and Crossmaglen. Update on completion of works at Cottage Hospital;
- Update on planned beds at St. Mary's, Drogheda.

Management responded to the comments and queries from the members as follows:-

- There are two types of funding arrangements in place in relation to Non-Statutory Organisations. Section 38 bodies relate to agencies/groups providing services on behalf of the HSE. This refers to services which the HSE is legally and statutorily required to provide and enters into an arrangement with an outside agency to do so on its behalf. Section 39 bodies relate to agencies/groups undertaking services which are similar to those of the HSE and to whom the HSE is providing grant aid to do so. However, the HSE is not legally or statutorily obligated to provide such services. It is acknowledged that further probity and oversight is brought to Section 39 bodies;
- In July 2011, the Minister for Health announced changes in the role of the NTPF to support the Special Delivery Unit (SDU) and introduced targets for waiting times for both scheduled and unscheduled care. For 2013, the target was that no adult should be waiting longer than eight months for an inpatient or day case treatment. The maximum waiting time target for a first outpatient appointment was 12 months. Referrals for Endoscopy are categorised as urgent and the target is, therefore, four weeks. At the end of 2013, no patient in Dublin North East was waiting more than one year. It is the responsibility of the patient's GP to refer in the first instance and it is vital that all correct information be submitted upon referral. Work is in place at present to develop a standardised referral process;
- The Cottage Hospital is currently being developed into a transitional care unit and undergoing a refurbishment programme in line with HIQA compliance and Regulations and Standards for residential units. Work on the ground floor is now complete. Remaining works are well advanced;
- An update will issue in relation to St. Mary's, Drogheda.

1. Adoption of minutes of meeting held on Monday, 25th November, 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 25th November, 2013 were adopted by the Forum on the proposal of Cllr. Gerry Murray and seconded by Cllr. Brian McKenna.

2. Health Service Executive Updates

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

- Publication of the HSE Service Plan for 2014;
- The Amiens Street Clinic celebrates its 20th anniversary;
- Parent and Baby Support Group celebrates ten successful years;
- 'Failte Isteach' project in Tyrrelstown, North Dublin acknowledged for the contribution they are making to the community;
- Irish Cancer Society donates €90,000 to support bowel cancer screening in Louth;
- Presentation of €3,000 to the Orthopaedic Unit in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda;
- New, hard hitting anti smoking adverts from HSE;
- HSE Primary Care facilities to become 'Tobacco Free Campuses';
- 'Power of Words' means bibliotherapy is accessible to all;
- Child & Family Agency;
- Health Matters.

A discussion took place where members raised the following issues:-

- Clarification in relation to numbers participating and the uptake of the 'Failte Isteach' project in Tyrrelstown, North Dublin;
- Proposal to write to Mr. Gerry Collins in relation to the HSE Quit campaign to acknowledge the work he is doing to encourage smokers to quit.

Senior management responded to the questions and comments from the members as follows:-

- The 'Failte Isteach' project is organised by Blanchardstown Area Partnership with volunteers providing free conversational English classes for non nationals. The programme is at present over subscribed;
- It was agreed to issue a letter to Mr. Gerry Collins in support of his efforts.

3. Presentation on 'Healthy Habits for Healthy Families'

Dr. Nazih Eldin, Head of Health Promotion, made a presentation to members on 'Healthy Habits for Healthy Families (copy appended to the official minute).

Members thanked Dr. Eldin for his presentation and a discussion took place where members raised the following issues:-

- Link between obesity and lack of sleep;
- Drinks labelled as low calorie or 0%;
- Comparison to other countries;
- Early intervention – from birth;
- Connection with diabetes;
- Eating late in the evenings or at night;
- Connection with affluence;
- Initiatives that members can assist with as county councillors.

Dr. Eldin responded to the questions and comments from the members as follows:-

- It was not recognised in the past that there was a link between being overweight/obese and lack of sleep. While a person is awake they tend to partake in more activities, such as watching tv, playing video games, etc. As there is a strong relationship with sedentary activities and food they are likely to have snacks and drinks. This cycle is likely to continue into adulthood;
- Drinks labelled 0% can not only mean zero calories, but sometimes it refers to zero colouring, additives, etc.;
- Similar countries, such as Northern Ireland, UK, Scotland and Wales have higher rates of obesity;
- Hospital gynaecologists are updated in relation to information and advice for parents on nutrition and obesity. Research shows that good nutrition starts in the womb and the first 1000 days in the life of a child are crucial. Also, of great importance to babies are the benefits of breastfeeding. However, only 42% of Irish mothers breastfeed at present;
- 80% of all diabetics are overweight or obese;
- It is known that lighter meals in the evening are more beneficial. Eating late contributes to being overweight;
- Although 50% of the affluent population are overweight or obese, it is not linked to obesity. This section of society tend to be more active and more educated;
- Research has found that the contribution of county councillors is crucial, e.g. providing walkways, pathways, planning, cycle lanes, parking. Initiatives will be examined and a response will issue to members.

4. **Regional Health Forum Annual Report 2013**

The report was noted by the members.

5. **Motion**

“That a comprehensive report be given to the Forum itemising the expenditure planned for this year at St. Francis Hospice, Blanchardstown and the expected number of inpatients that can be accommodated for each month of 2014.”

Cllr. Kieran Dennison

Cllr. Kieran Dennison sought further clarification on the number of beds to be provided at the hospice this year.

Consideration is being given to the most efficient way to use the additional funding, whether to open a large number of beds over a short period of time or to open on a phased basis. It is hoped to open as many beds as possible, with securing the balance in funding by 2015. An update on the hospice will be provided at a future meeting.

6. Questions

“Does the 2009 HSE ‘Back to Work’ protocol apply to all employees?”

Cllr. Bill Tormey

Cllr. Bill Tormey tabled an Emergency Motion as follows:-

- “To ask the Regional Director for Performance and Integration to review management of Connolly Hospital”.

The Motion was adopted by the Forum.

“Can the HSE please outline the plans/strategies to improve and reinstate public confidence in the Ambulance Service provision in the North East, bearing in mind the recent disimprovement/downgrading in ambulance provision in Meath, Louth, Cavan, Monaghan over the past six months? Also comment on the fact that one in four 999 calls are not meeting the recommended response time.”

Cllr. Nick Killian

Cllr. Nick Killian expressed disappointment with the lack of information provided in the response circulated. He spoke about public confidence in the service and reports that the population are hearing from the media which is undermining the service.

Mr. William Merriman responded by informing members that changes have been taking place in both the health services and ambulance services for the past number of years. The NAS have introduced 31 Advanced Paramedics in the North East and are currently upskilling all Paramedics and Advanced Paramedics. New deployment models, such as Rapid Response Vehicles, based in Trim and Ardee, have also been provided, along with six Intermediate Care Vehicles. Together with the recently implemented Advanced Priority Medical Dispatch System (AMPDS) in all control centres, the NAS are providing safe, high quality outcomes for patients in the North East.

In relation to response times, Mr. Merriman outlined targets set by HIQA of 18 minutes 59 seconds 80% of the time. He stressed that this is a work in progress and that the NAS constantly endeavour to achieve the response time 100% of the time. Statistics have proved that an improved service in place with faster response times.

He briefed members on media coverage saying that the good news stories are not publicised and that it was a matter for the NAS to improve on this issue.

He outlined staffing issues and that absenteeism rates had reduced. Meeting with staff are also taking place in all ambulance stations in an attempt to build confidence with staff.

Cllr. Anthony Donohoe questioned whether the standards and targets set by HIQA had perhaps been set too high and were unachievable.

Mr. Paul Gallen responded saying that HIQA standards were based on international best practice. However, the United Kingdom were now discussing abolishing response time

standards as they were unachievable. As targets still remain in Ireland, the NAS will continue to endeavour to meet and surpass.

Cllr. Tommy Byrne raised a number of incidents including a call in Drogheda over the Christmas period where the Gardai transported a patient to hospital. He enquired to plans for an ambulance base at the new Fire Station.

Mr. Merriman stated that there is always a roll on ambulances in the region and there had been no drop in service to Drogheda. There are no plans to base an ambulance at the Fire Station. Resources in this regard are determined at departmental level.

“Can the HSE explain:-

- (a) Why individuals would receive a ‘drugs card’ as well as a full medical card when a medical card entitles the bearer to automatic free drugs in any case? Is there an element of duplication in the issuing of these cards and what is the cost attached to the issuing of a second card?**
- (b) How many medical cards, drug cards and GP cards have been issued in 2011, 2012 and 2013 respectively?”**

Cllr. Robbie Gallagher

Cllr. Robbie Gallagher stated that he had been told by certain individuals that they were in receipt of both a Medical Card and a Drugs Payment Scheme card.

Ms. Angela Fitzgerald stated that this should not be the case as a Medical Card automatically entitles the person to free prescription medicines. However, the person may have applied in error or applied for both cards simultaneously. Ms. Fitzgerald suggested that Mr. Paddy Burke, PCRS be invited to the Forum to present and to clarify on technical issues.

It was agreed that a presentation on PCRS would be arranged for a future meeting.

“Can the HSE confirm, or at least investigate, the possibility of linking the current ambulance communication GPS to the Sat Nav systems available to overcome the delay on waiting for new post code system which will be opposed by a large body of people?”

Cllr. Brian McKenna

Cllr. Brian McKenna sought further clarification on National Digital Radio. Mr. William Merriman updated members in relation to the now two control centres nationally, one of which is based in Tallaght, stating that it is now possible for the control centre to map all NAS vehicles through National Digital Radio. The Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system also allows the nearest available resource to be dispatched to the emergency promptly. He stated that SatNavs are not equipped to pinpoint a specific location, they often do not show the quickest route and they need to be updated regularly.

“To ask the cost incurred by Beaumont Hospital in outsourcing 84 day cases to the Bon Secours Hospital in Glasnevin?”

Cllr. Kieran Dennison

Cllr. Kieran Dennison requested an overall figure in respect of his Question. It was agreed that the matter would be examined and response would issue.

7. Chairperson’s Correspondence

Cllr. Bill Tormey welcomed Ms. Grainne Maguire to the membership of the Regional Health Forum – Dublin North East. Cllr. Maguire replaces Cllr. May McKeon on the Forum.

8. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of the Regional Health Forum - Dublin North East will take place on Monday, 24th March, 2014 at 2:00pm.

Signed:

Bill Tormey,
Chairperson.