

MINUTES - MEETING OF REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM SOUTH

Thursday 11th April, 2013 @ 2.00pm
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNTY HALL, CORK

Present:

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| Cllr. Liam Ahearn | Cllr. Sean Lonergan |
| Cllr. John Buttimer | Cllr. Tom Maher |
| Cllr. John Carey | Cllr. Barbara Murray |
| Cllr. Catherine Clancy | Cllr. Dr. Sean McCarthy |
| Cllr. Timmy Collins | Cllr. Arthur McDonald |
| Cllr. John Coonan | Cllr. Michael O'Brien |
| Cllr. Brendan Cronin | Cllr. Bobby O'Connell |
| Cllr. Dr. Patrick Crowley | Cllr. Frank O'Flynn |
| Cllr. John Joe Culloty | Cllr. Laurence (Cha) O'Neill |
| Cllr. Tony Dempsey | Cllr. John O'Sullivan |
| Cllr. Declan Doocey | Cllr. Hilary Quinlan |
| Cllr. Wayne Fennell | Cllr. Mary Shields |
| Cllr. Mary Hanna Hourigan | Cllr. Jerry Sullivan |
| Cllr. Michael Kinsella | Cllr. Jim Townsend - Chairperson |
| Cllr. Tim Lombard | Cllr. Ted Tynan |

Apologies: Cllr. Denis Kennedy Cllr. Matt Griffin
 Cllr. Pat Cody Cllr. Seamus Ryan

In Attendance:

- Mr. Michael Fitzgerald, A/Regional Director of Operations - South
- Mr. Richie Dooley, Area Manager, HSE Waterford/Wexford
- Ms. Anna-Marie Lanigan, Area Manager, HSE Carlow/Kilkenny and South Tipperary
- Ms. Deirdre Scully, Area Manager, Community Services, Cork
- Mr. PJ Hathaway A/Assistant National Director HR, HSE South
- Ms. Angie O'Brien, Area Communications Manager, HSE South
- Ms. Sinéad Byrne, Manager, Regional Health Forum, South
- Regional Health Forum Office staff

1. Adoption of the Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 28th February 2013

At the proposal of Cllr. Sean Lonergan seconded by Cllr. John Coonan, the Minutes of the Forum meeting held on Thursday 28th February 2013 were approved and adopted by members.

2. Chairperson's Correspondence

Cllr. Jim Townsend, Chairperson welcomed Members and Managers to the meeting. Cllr. Townsend informed members that Mr. Pat Healy was unable to attend and Mr. Michael Fitzgerald was deputising in Mr. Healy's place. Apologies were also received from Mr. Ger Reaney who was on leave and members were informed that Ms. Deirdre Scully would respond to any queries on Mr. Reaney's behalf. Cllr. Townsend also welcomed Mr. Peter Daly, Emergency Management Officer, HSE South and outlined that Mr. Daly would answer any queries in relation to Cllr. Buttimer's Question on the Ambulance Service and the Notice of Motions in relation to the Helipad at Cork University Hospital.

Adoption of the Forum's Annual Report 2012 was required and this was proposed by Cllr. Declan Doocey and seconded by Cllr. Liam Ahearn. It was agreed that a copy of the Report would be circulated via e-mail to the City and County Managers of nominated members.

Again members were advised that there is no debate on Questions submitted with only the member who submitted the Question being able to speak with the provision for one supplementary question to be asked following on from the response if he/she wishes.

- 3. Reports by Chairpersons of**
- (a)** Acute Hospitals Services and Population Health Committee
 - (b)** PCCC Committee

both held Thursday 21st March 2013 in Kilkenny.

Synopses of the Reports from the Chairpersons of the previous committee meetings held in Kilkenny on Thursday 21st March 2013 were taken as read.

3.1 Reports from Committees

- Report on Emerald Project, St Luke's General Hospital – Ms Anna-Marie Lanigan, Area Manager, Carlow, Kilkenny and South Tipperary
- Overview of the Substance Misuse Services within the Southeast – Dr Derval Howley, Regional Coordinator for Social Inclusion & Substance Misuse HSE (SE).

The above reports were re-circulated and were noted.

Cllr. Townsend informed members that the next Committee Meetings will be held on Thursday 11th July 2013 (date changed from 4th July) in the Performance and Development Unit which has now moved to the administration building, St. Mary's Health Campus, Bakers Road, Cork. Members have been notified of this change already by letter and a map with directions will be included with the notification of the committee meetings nearer the time.

4. Notice of Motions

4(a) Cllr. Brendan Cronin moved the following Notice of Motion standing in his name:

"To request the HSE to end the current practice of having male and female patients sharing the same hospital ward as it does not ensure the protection of patient dignity and can create embarrassing situations for patients, it is totally inappropriate for this practice to continue in multi-bed wards."

A written response was circulated to members from Mr. Michael Fitzgerald, Area Manager, HSE Kerry. In the absence of Cllr. Brendan Cronin the response was noted.

4(b), 4(c) and 4(d) Cllr. Frank O'Flynn, Cllr. John Buttimer, and Cllr. Mary Shields respectively moved the following Notice of Motions standing in their name: -

"That following the recent media reports that there was no suitable helicopter landing area in Cork University Hospital, that the HSE would put a suitable & adequate onsite helipad in place as a matter of urgency to ensure that the HSE can facilitate the transfer & landing of all patients straight to the hospital which is the major trauma centre for the region and give an up to date report on the reasons for the delays in this to date."

"That the HSE would publish an updated report of the status of the helicopter landing pad for CUH/CUMH Campus and that this report would set a date by which such a facility will be operational. The report should also state the class of helicopter being catered for and the range such helicopters can travel."

"It is imperative that the HSE recognise the importance of providing a landing area for a 'Helipad' on the grounds of Cork University Hospital. The aforementioned is the largest Hospital in Ireland, currently housing 800 beds which will increase to 1,000 upon the opening of an €85m Cardiac unit. (It should be noted that CUH is the only level 1 Trauma Centre in the country specializing in over 40 different medical and surgical procedures on campus.)"

A written response was circulated to members from Mr. Ger Reaney, Area Manager, HSE Cork. As Mr. Reaney was on leave Ms. Scully outlined the current procedure with regard to patients who require urgent transfer to/from Cork University Hospital (CUH) by air ambulance. She explained that the provision of helipad facilities at CUH is being advanced from 2 perspectives. The first one is around the consolidation of facilities in Highfield Rugby Club which when complete hopefully within the next 4-6 weeks will have a 24hr operational capability. The site survey has been completed and trials are due to take place shortly.

The second option is the development of a rooftop helipad on the existing Emergency Department which will offer 24/7 helicopter access. Ms. Scully explained that a study has been carried out to establish the structural capacity of the Emergency Department building to carry the loads arising from the landing of helicopters. This will cost approximately €2m and will be subject to normal planning permissions. She outlined that discussions have commenced with all relevant agencies and a business case is being prepared seeking Capital Approval for this project. Once this work has concluded members were informed that the next step would be to appoint a Design Team. Ms. Scully also outlined that helicopters currently being used by the Irish Coast Guard are not type approved to land on a rooftop helipad, but will be accommodated on the landing site at the Highfield Rugby Club site.

In the absence of Cllr. Buttimer, Cllr. Mary Shields outlined in detail her concerns on the current lack of a helipad on CUH campus for the last 10 years. She referred to previous Notice of Motions submitted and also referred to PQs which had previously been submitted on this issue. She expressed her dissatisfaction that a hospital of such size specialising in so many different medical and surgical procedures is without such a vital facility and referred to a number of Dublin Hospitals which are smaller than CUH that have this service. With regard to Capital Approval for this project Cllr. Shields insisted that the Government and Minister approve this project as a matter of urgency and was concerned in relation to the €2m cost. She complimented the Ambulance Service on the current service being provided to transfer patients to and from Cork Airport as necessary.

Cllr. Frank O'Flynn thanked Ms. Scully for her response and was reassured that progress is being made. He sought clarification on the timeframe involved for the development of a rooftop helipad on the existing Emergency Department and Ms. Scully informed Cllr. O'Flynn that she would discuss with Mr. Ger Reaney and report back to him.

A number of members were in support of the concerns outlined by Cllr. Shields and felt that a helipad needs to be progressed as a matter of urgency.

Mr. Peter Daly, Emergency Management Officer, HSE South clarified that in relation to the landing facilities in Highfield, the tarmac is down, the gate is in place and the trials are currently being undertaken using this site which is only a 2 minute ambulance drive from CUH to the helipad. This helipad will accommodate both the Irish Coast Guard and the Irish Air Corps helicopters which account for the majority of air transfers to CUH. With regard to the development of a helipad on the rooftop of CUH Emergency Department, Mr. Daly explained that development of the roof of any building will always be expensive but in the case of CUH the same company that were involved previously are looking at this again. In the meantime consolidation of the Highfield facilities is a practical interim arrangement. Cllr. Shields thanked Mr. Daly for his information and referred to the possibility of using the location previously proposed for the co-located hospital on the grounds of CUH. However, Mr. Daly explained that it is not as simple as finding a location as there are a number of factors to be considered which include height restrictions, approach with regard to landing and also planning permission.

4(e) Cllr. John O'Sullivan moved the following Notice of Motion standing in his name:

"In light of the recent consumer Association survey findings of up to 200% price differential in some drug retail prices is there a need to change the supply mode to reduce expenditure in Drugs as a method of cost savings. This would enable funding for the provision of essential services."

A written response was circulated to members from Ms. Anna-Marie Lanigan, Area Manager, Carlow/Kilkenny and South Tipperary who outlined that the recent National Consumer Agency survey related to prices quoted by pharmacists for prescription items for private patients as opposed to medical card patients. Ms. Lanigan explained that this is not within the remit of the Health Service Executive. She did point out, however, that in November 2012, the Irish Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association, the HSE and the Department of Health closed a new agreement which reduced these costs. The Department expects that legislation will be passed shortly thereby introducing a system of reference pricing and generic substitution which will deliver further savings in the cost of medicines for the health service and private patients.

Cllr. O'Sullivan thanked Ms. Lanigan for the response and felt that if further savings could be made in this area, resources could be put into maximising the delivery of services such as home helps, home care packages etc. He also referred to the significant drugs bill incurred by the HSE and felt that the HSE should look at obtaining the best outcome for the consumer. Members supported Cllr. O'Sullivan in his motion and a number of members outlined that Ireland has the highest drugs cost compared to other countries with generic drugs often being more expensive.

Ms. Anna-Marie Lanigan noted the remarks from members and agreed to feed back their comments to the PCRS.

4(f) Cllr. John Coonan moved the following Notice of Motion standing in his name:

"In light of the ongoing increasing pressure on all our hospital and nursing home services, that a full review of the efficiency and effectiveness of home help and home support services be undertaken by HSE South."

A written response was circulated to members from Mr. Michael Fitzgerald, A/Regional Director of Operations, South. Mr. Fitzgerald explained that provision of home help, home care packages, day and respite care to allow older people live independently in their own homes for as long as possible is among the key priorities for HSE South. He explained that the HSE South plans to deliver 3.62m home help hours in 2013 to a target of 15,000 people and provide 2,400 Home Care Packages. Mr. Fitzgerald outlined that delivery of these services are subject to ongoing review. This ensures efficient and effective operation of services to maximum capacity, and guarantees

that the assessed needs of those who require the service are met in the best possible way. Mr. Fitzgerald also informed members that to support hospital discharges, a combined approach is used between acute and community services to ensure an efficient transition from hospitals to home or residential care settings. This discharge planning commences once a patient enters the acute service.

Cllr. Coonan thanked Mr. Fitzgerald for his response and stated that the home help and home care package services are the best preventative health care medicine for keeping the elderly in their own homes. While accepting the contents of the response Cllr. Coonan is not satisfied with the current provision of hours and would like to see further support and financial back-up put into community services including increases in home help hours. He feels this would reduce pressure on nursing homes and provision of nursing home beds.

Mr. Fitzgerald accepted the comments made by Cllr. Coonan and re-iterated that the home help/home care package services are continuing to be key priorities for HSE South with continuous reviews, focus on home support, day care and social services which all add up to the maintenance of our elderly in their homes for as long as is possible. He also explained that the service has been significantly transformed and reassured members that the HSE continues to ensure that essential personal care and essential household duties are prioritised over the lesser priority areas of non-essential household duties. He explained that it is a unique service and each case is reviewed individually.

A number of members supported the motion and a discussion arose on the home help service where a number of individual cases were referred to. Members also outlined their concerns regarding the decrease in funding for the Mobility Aids Housing Grants Scheme which comes under the remit of the County Councils and the feeling that the Home Help Service will come under more increasing pressure. A suggestion was made that a letter should be written to Minister Jan O'Sullivan to re-introduce additional funding for the Housing Grant Scheme.

5. Questions

5(a) Cllr. Brendan Cronin put forward the following Question:

“What is the current waiting period in Kerry for a child that is diagnosed as requiring orthodontic treatment until treatment actually begins and how many Kerry patients are waiting for such treatment?”

A written response was circulated to members from Ms. Deirdre Scully, Area Manager, Community Services – Cork. Ms. Scully outlined the provision of the Consultant-led Orthodontic Service for Kerry in relation to assessments, reviews and the prioritisation of cases according to the level of intervention required. She outlined that the service for routine cases has reduced from 8 years to 3 years since the Consultant took on the service with priority patients being seen for treatment within one year. Quarterly returns are available nationally regarding the total number of patients awaiting treatment and as at the end of December 2012 1,511 are on the waiting list for HSE South Cork and Kerry. Cllr. Cronin thanked Ms. Scully for her response and was somewhat reassured that the routine list has reduced to 3 years from 8. He queried why it was not possible to provide a breakdown of the figures of children awaiting Orthodontic treatment for Kerry. Ms. Scully explained that these figures are managed centrally was not possible to provide this information today but she would come back to Cllr. Cronin with these figures.

5(b) Cllr. John Buttimer put forward the following Question:

“To ask the HSE South in relation to the HSE Ambulance Re-configuration to outline the changes in the service due to relocation of the ambulance base Central Command to Central Location (Dublin), the Number of ambulances on call by day 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. in Cork City/County, the areas to which they are assigned and to

comment on reports of queuing of ambulances at A&E locations across the city and the protocol for managing same?"

A joint written response was circulated to members from Mr. Nicky Glynn, Area Operations Manager South, National Ambulance Service and Mr. Ger Reaney, Area Manager, HSE Cork. In the absence of Cllr. John Buttimer, the response was noted.

5(c) Cllr. Wayne Fennell put forward the following Question:

"What was the expenditure on legal services for Child Care/Child Protection for Q4 in 2012 for HSE Carlow/Kilkenny?"

A written response was circulated to members by Ms. Anna-Marie Lanigan, Area Manager, Carlow/Kilkenny and South Tipperary. Prior to the meeting, Cllr. Fennell had been informed that the provision of Legal Services had moved to a National Centralised Framework since 2011 and payments for Child Welfare and Protection Cases are processed through this office. As the information was currently being collated, Cllr. Fennell was informed that a formal response would be issued to him within the next two weeks.

5(d) Cllr. John O'Sullivan put forward the following Question:

"What is the plan for elder care in the town of Bandon, in particular the need to future proof the future of Bandon Community Hospital?"

A written response was circulated to members from Ms. Deirdre Scully, Area Manager, Community Services – Cork which outlined the provision of services for the care of older people of Bandon town and its surrounding areas. Ms. Scully explained that the development of a 17 bedded extension at the hospital was included in the HSE Capital Plan 2006-2011 with an allocation of €7m funding provided in 2008 for the design of the extension and approval given to proceed to the planning stage which was granted at the end of 2008. However, due to the economic downturn and reduction in the capital allocation it was not possible to secure funding to move to the construction stage of the project. Ms. Scully explained that the provision of residential services for older people continue to be delivered in the context of HIQA standards and Fair Deal and outlined funding spent and refurbishments undertaken in Bandon Community Hospital over the past 5 years. These include receipt of a Fire Cert of compliance which allowed the hospital to achieve registration with HIQA as a 22 bedded facility until 2015. Ms. Scully explained that to achieve registration from 2015, compliance of more exacting National quality standards for residential care settings for older people will need to be adhered to and work is currently being done nationally, regionally and locally to prepare for this. In summary, Ms. Scully informed members that there is a high level of demand for service in Bandon Community Hospital with limited bed provision and due to the ageing population demand for beds at the hospital will continue to increase. However, this will be a key factor in supporting prioritisation of Bandon Community Hospital for capital developments should funding become available to complete capital projects.

Cllr John O'Sullivan thanked Ms. Scully for the response but outlined his concerns in relation to the current bed capacity for Bandon town and surrounding area. He referred to two private facilities which are now closed. He referred to 62 beds in Clonakilty and a population of 27,000 people in Skibbereen and expressed concerns that after 2015 Bandon Community hospital may not reach HIQA standards.

Mr. Michael Fitzgerald, A/Regional Director of Operations clarified that currently an assessment of all existing community hospitals is being undertaken with a significant piece of work done before Christmas on public long stay beds. The results will form a plan of action for each area/unit on what is required for their future. An overall Report will be submitted to the Department of Health over the next 5-6 weeks to include individual costings with multi-occupancy of rooms being looked

at. This will bring community hospitals into compliance with environmental requirements of the *'National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for older people in Ireland'* Cllr. O'Sullivan emphasised the importance of prioritising this Report for Bandon Community Hospital and suggested that it be forwarded to the Minister as a matter of urgency. Mr. Fitzgerald while taking on board suggestions from Cllr. O'Sullivan explained that there are 39 such units across the HSE South and the HSE must remain impartial. He reiterated that the works required at Bandon Community Hospital will be taken into account in this process and considered by the HSE and the Department of Health when finalised and he agreed to keep members updated on progress.

5(e) Cllr. John Coonan put forward the following Question:

"What is the up to date position of response to the HSE policy of contractual arrangement of employing recently qualified nurses to the service at the rate of 80% of basic salary?"

A written response was circulated to members from Mr. P.J. Hathaway, A/Assistant National Director of HR, HSE South which outlined phase 1 of the Nurse Graduate Initiative launched in January 2013 and phase 2 launched in February 2013. Mr. Hathaway explained that the graduate nurses will be paid at a rate of 80% of the first point of the Staff Nurse Salary Scale. He outlined that this initiative will provide job security for a 2 year period and will also provide substantial clinical experience in a wide variety of settings within the acute and community services. The purpose of these appointments is to replace agency staff and overtime and will significantly reduce pay costs for overtime and agency work. These appointments are not to be used for the filling of vacancies.

Cllr. John Coonan thanked Mr. Hathaway for the response but is dissatisfied with the position outlined. He felt that it was not satisfactory that nursing graduates who have spent four years in college are being offered jobs paid at a rate of 80% of the basic staff nurse salary. Mr. Hathaway explained that it is a Government initiative with the recruitment process being managed by the HSE's National Recruitment Service. He outlined that it is difficult to assess the overall impact of the process at this stage as the take-up of the positions is very low. He confirmed that the HSE is currently monitoring the situation.

6. Date and Time of next Meeting

The next meeting of the Regional Health Forum, South will be held on **Thursday 16th May 2013** at **2pm, Council Chambers, County Hall, Cork.**