

REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM

Chairperson,
Cllr. John Joe Culloty

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MINUTES - MEETING OF REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM SOUTH

Thursday 18th June 2015 @ 2pm
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNTY HALL, CORK

Present:

Cllr. James Brown
Cllr. John A. Collins
Cllr. Timmy Collins
Cllr. Henry Cremin
Cllr. John Joe Culloty
Cllr. Davy Daniels
Cllr. Mary Rose Desmond
Cllr. Michael Doyle
Cllr. Denis Foley
Cllr. Deirdre Forde
Cllr. Breda Gardner
Cllr. Imelda Goldsboro
Cllr. Danny Healy-Rae
Cllr. Mike Kennelly

Cllr. Mary Linehan Foley
Cllr. Joe Malone
Cllr. Michael McCarthy
Cllr. Rachel McCarthy
Cllr. Bobby O'Connell
Cllr. Aaron O'Sullivan
Cllr. John Pender
Cllr. Damian Quigg
Cllr. William Quinn
Cllr. Bob Ryan
Cllr. John Sheehan
Cllr. Mary Shields
Cllr. Joe Sullivan
Cllr. Tom Wood

Apologies:

Cllr. Liam Brazil
Cllr. Mary Butler
Cllr. John Buttimer
Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald
Cllr. Mary Hanna Hourigan
Cllr. Louise McLoughlin
Cllr. Seanie Power

In Attendance:

Mr Ger O' Callaghan, Chief Operations Officer, South/South West Hospitals Group
Mr Ger Reaney, Chief Officer, Community Health Organisation Cork & Kerry
Ms Jeanne Hendrick, General Manager, South East Mental Health Services
Mr Michael Norris, Operations Performance Manager, National Ambulance Service
Members of the HSE South Forum Office staff

1. Adoption of the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Thursday 7th May 2015

In the unavoidable absence of the Chairperson Cllr John Buttimer, the Vice Chairperson, Cllr Denis Foley, assumed the chair.

On the proposal of Cllr John Pender, seconded by Cllr. Davy Daniels, the Minutes of the Forum meeting held on Thursday, May 7th 2015 were approved and adopted by the members.

2. Chairperson's correspondence

Cllr Foley advised the meeting that Cllr. Buttimer was unable to attend today's meeting, due to a working commitment but had asked that his thanks would be conveyed to the Vice Chairperson, Forum Office staff, HSE Managers, and Forum members for their cooperation and support during the past year. Cllr Buttimer will formally record his appreciation of the Forum and its value to members, at the September 2015 meeting.

Election of Chairperson-

Cllr John Joe Culloty was proposed by Cllr Imelda Goldsboro and seconded by Cllr Bobby O 'Connell. Cllr Henry Cremin was proposed by Cllr Damian Quigg and seconded by Cllr Rachel Mc Carthy. On a show of hands Cllr Culloty was elected by 21 votes to 6 and assumed the Chair.

Cllr Culloty thanked his proposer and seconder as well as the Councillors who supported him. He acknowledged that Cllr Buttimer had done a fantastic job and insisted that the Forum was a helpful and important base for health service discussion. He undertook to be as efficient as possible and asked for the assistance of the Forum members in that respect.

Election of Vice Chairperson-

Cllr Imelda Goldsboro was proposed by Cllr Mary Shields and seconded by Cllr Deirdre Forde. Cllr Breda Gardner was proposed by Cllr Henry Cremin and seconded by Cllr Mary Linehan-Foley. On a show of hands Cllr Goldsboro was elected by 19 votes to 8.

3. Committees:

The next Committee Meetings will be held on:

- Tuesday 13th October 2015 - South East Committee Meeting and
- Thursday 15th October 2015 - South West Committee Meeting.

4. Notices of Motion

- (a) Cllr. Danny Healy-Rae moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"To ask the HSE to revert back to the previous system of ambulance service as the central office service based in Dublin is not working out."

A detailed written response from Mr Michael Norris, Operations Performance Manager, National Ambulance Service, which addressed the single National Control Centre and Ambulance response times, was circulated to members and acknowledged by Cllr. Healy-Rae.

Further representations were made by Cllr Healy Rae to restore the previous arrangement and he highlighted some recent experiences, regarding ambulance response times, in Co. Kerry, which concerned him. He felt that the HSE had reduced

the number of Ambulances as well as Emergency Medical Technicians and indicated that Kerry people were unhappy with the present service and wanted to revert to the previous arrangement.

Cllr Damian Quigg supported Cllr Healy Rae's case and asked that the HSE would enhance its working relationship with the Local Authority Fire Service and ensure that in critical cases the Ambulance, Fire Service and Gardai would all be despatched to the scene simultaneously.

The Chairperson, Cllr John Joe Culloty, supported the call for two emergency ambulances to be based in Killarney.

In response Mr. Norris made it clear that the previous system was gone for good and that the National centre is aware of where every ambulance service vehicle is situated and can allocate them across county bounds as required. The Computer Aided Despatch system selects the nearest ambulance for each call automatically and continues to be enhanced. It will be at its peak performance in September next and will be then among the most modern ambulance systems in the world. It is consistent all the way and eliminates human error. Regarding the removal of on call in Cork and Kerry, Mr Norris noted the significant improvement since then in response times and best outcomes are being achieved by the use of the modern control centre, with local knowledge still available to the service. The introduction of unique house identifiers will further eliminate confusion over names or addresses and at present the NAS is using the maps used by An Post, which identify most locations promptly. He has been pursuing the integration of the Fire service for some time and noted that it works better in Urban rather than Rural areas.

Details of response times are available on the HIQA web site and Mr Norris highlighted the 10 % increase in emergency calls across Ireland. Members will see that response times have not worsened in this area and are slightly improved. In response to the specific cases highlighted, Mr Norris undertook to respond privately to the Chairperson and Cllr Healy Rae.

(b) Cllr. Tom Wood moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"With the proposed re-organisation of services (including rehabilitation services) from St Patricks Hospital, Cashel to Our Lady's Campus, Cashel evidently in trouble due to HIQA and other concerns, this Forum calls on HSE to end the uncertainty, allow the Rehabilitation Unit remain in its rightful location at St Patricks and wisely allocate funding for the refurbishment of other facilities there."

A written response from Mr Anna Marie Lanigan, Area Manager, South East Primary Community & Continuing Care Services, was circulated to members and acknowledged by Cllr. Wood.

As a follow up, Cllr Wood insisted that this response was similar to previous replies which had been issued in recent years. He noted that HIQA was now involved and that the HSE is position is of considering all options. Cllr Wood insisted there was no reason for the Rehabilitation Unit to be moved insofar as it was planned and built at ground floor level and is now being moved upstairs. He said that the 'Le Cairde' unit is rarely used and that the expense on that unit should be used to upgrade St Patrick's Hospital about which there is now uncertainty. He reminded the Forum that about 18 months ago there had been a plan to provide 21 step down beds at Our Lady's Hospital to relieve pressure on the South Tipperary General Hospital but this has now changed. He asked that the issue of service provision in Cashel would be reviewed and that as HIQA standards are too strict especially for patients Long Stay Hospitals a representative of that Authority would be invited to attend a future Forum

meeting. In reply Ms Hendrick acknowledged Cllr Wood's passion for Elderly Services but reminded him that the HSE is obliged to comply with HIQA standards or facilities may be closed. The HSE tries to work with HIQA but standards have changed considerably in recent years and many of our buildings are based on multiple occupancy rooms. The standard now is single occupancy rooms and even recent HSE buildings don't all have that compliance. Ms Hendrick advised that a steering group had been set up to advise on requirements for service design and the upgrading of the facilities at St Patricks and Our Lady's sites respectively.

Ms Hendrick undertook to advise Cllr Wood if the Le Cairde Unit has been transferred to the HSE.

5. Questions

- (a) Cllr. Mary Lenihan Foley put forward the following question:

"When will the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in East Cork (based in Glanmire) have a full time Consultant Psychiatrist and will there be a cover for clinical psychologist in the team".

A written response from Mr Ger Reaney was circulated to members and acknowledged by Cllr. Lenihan Foley.

There are many people in East Cork who need the service and they have been on waiting lists for some time according to Cllr Lenihan Foley. She emphasised that young people benefit from early intervention and was delighted to note that Dr Begley had returned to duty following her Maternity Leave.

Mr Reaney advised that while the HSE is not funded for maternity leave replacements, the workload had been reorganised, with the co operation of Dr Begley's colleagues. Mr Reaney confirmed that it is difficult to recruit locum Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists and there is a shortage of qualified Consultants in that area. In conclusion Mr Reaney undertook to address any specific service queries that Cllr Lenihan Foley wished to raise after the meeting.

- (b) Cllr. Danny Healy Rae put forward the following question:

"To ask the HSE why aren't they opening up more short stay beds in Kenmare and Dingle District Hospitals."

A written response from Mr Ger Reaney was circulated to members and acknowledged by Cllr. Healy-Rae.

Having studied the response Cllr Healy Rae expressed his disappointment that only about half the beds are being used in Kenmare and Dingle Hospitals. He said that there are no step down or respite beds available in Kenmare. Cllr Healy Rae recalled the efforts to secure funding for both hospitals and felt that more use should be made of their facilities. His opinion is that it is difficult to secure respite in Kenmare and that step down beds should be provided also for Kerry General Hospital.

In response Mr Reaney said that, based on the current information available, the services provided are sufficient to meet the current need. The current review on short stay bed usage will be available at the end of July. This review is also mindful of delayed discharges in the acute hospitals in Kerry and Cork and these cases are being kept to a minimum. The trend delayed discharges in Kerry is downwards in recent

months and some cases are beyond the control of community hospitals especially where older patients still require acute care.

The issue of access to respite care in Kenmare will be examined. In conclusion, Mr Reaney assured Cllr Healy Rae that the HSE would continue to monitor identified needs in the community and respond within the limits of resource availability.

- (c) Cllr. Tom Wood put forward the following question:

“What services are provided at Our Lady’s Hospital Cashel and on its adjoining campus and what is the frequency of same.”

A written response from Mr Anna Marie Lanigan, Area Manager, South East Primary Community & Continuing Care Services, was circulated to members and acknowledged by Cllr. Wood.

As a follow up, Cllr Wood asked if X Ray services are still provided at Our Lady’s Hospital and Ms Jeanne Hendrick, deputising for Ms Lanigan, undertook to check and advise him.

- (d) Cllr. Dr John Sheehan put forward the following question:

“Can the HSE outline how many contracts for the new GP Under 6 Scheme have being signed in the HSE, both nationally and in the HSE South.”

A written response from Mr Anna Marie Lanigan and Mr Ger Reaney was circulated to members and acknowledged by Cllr. Dr John Sheehan.

In reply, Cllr Sheehan highlighted a GP manpower shortage in some areas and highlighted Ballyheigue as having a current vacancy. He asked if current GP panel numbers include the under 6 cohort, or if these are additional and Mr Reaney undertook to arrange a personal response.

Cllr McCarthy asked if the HSE had a set target of contracts in mind to provide the service and if there were ongoing links with GPs about signing up. She also highlighted the absence of a GP contract to provide the service in Bandon. Mr Reaney advised that there hadn’t been direct contact up to now because the contracts had been offered and it was left to GPs to consider with their respective staff association. The HSE objective is to facilitate access to the service and the % signing is changing on a daily basis. The HSE will keep the matter under review and act if an intervention is required.

Cllr Davy Daniels asked for an update on progress with the new Community Hospital in Waterford to replace St. Patricks. Ms Hendrick advised that the project was proceeding on schedule and undertook to confirm the position re planning application which has been lodged with Waterford City & County Council.

6. Date and time of next meeting

Thursday, 17th September 2015, at 2 pm, Council Chambers, County Hall, Cork.

The Chairman asked members to note the foregoing arrangements for the next meeting.