

REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM

Chairperson,
Cllr. Bobby O'Connell

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MINUTES - MEETING OF REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM SOUTH

Thursday 22nd March 2018 at 2pm
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNTY HALL, CORK

Present:

Cllr. John Carey
Cllr. Henry Cremin
Cllr. Brendan Cronin
Cllr. John Joe Culloty
Cllr. Davy Daniels
Cllr. Mary Rose Desmond
Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald
Cllr. Denis Foley
Cllr. Breda Gardner
Cllr. Mary Linehan Foley

Cllr. Joe Malone
Cllr. Michael McCarthy
Cllr. Suzanne McCarthy
Cllr. Arthur McDonald
Cllr. Jason Murphy
Cllr. Ray Murphy
Cllr. Mary Shields
Cllr. Joe Sullivan
Cllr. Tom Wood

Apologies:

Cllr. Timmy Collins
Cllr. Imelda Goldsboro
Cllr. Mary Hanna Hourigan
Cllr. Rachel McCarthy
Cllr. Louise McLoughlin
Cllr. Bobby O'Connell
Cllr. John Sheehan
Cllr. Frank Staples

In Attendance:

Dr. Ger O' Callaghan, Chief Operations Officer, South/South West Hospitals Group
Dr Derval Howley, Head of Service, Health and Well being, CHO5
Ms. Sinead Glennon, Head of Service, Mental Health, Cork and Kerry Community Healthcare
Ms. Lily Byrnes, General Manager, Wexford General Hospital, Ireland East Hospital Group
Members of the HSE South Forum Office staff

In the unavoidable absence of the Chairperson, Cllr. Bobby O' Connell, Cllr. Jason Murphy acted as Chair of the meeting.

1. Adoption of the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Thursday, 22nd February, 2018

On the proposal of Cllr. Joe Sullivan, seconded by Cllr. Michael Mc Carthy, the Minutes of the Forum meeting held on Thursday, February 22nd, 2018, were approved and adopted by the members.

2. Chairperson's correspondence

Members were reminded to switch off mobile phones.

3. Report from Wexford General Hospital

The acting chairperson introduced Ms. Lily Byrnes, General Manager, Wexford General Hospital (WGH), who was invited to update members on the present situation at the Hospital. WGH is based in the Ireland East Hospital Group, but Councillors from the county attend the South Forum meetings.

Ms Byrnes briefed the members regarding services at Wexford General Hospital. The Scheduled Care Waiting Lists, including Endoscopy Services at the hospital, were reaching their targets with regard to urgent Endoscopies. There is some increased demand in routine Endoscopies but this is being managed through the Ireland East Hospital Group. The hospital is performing well against key performance indicators. For 2017 v 2016 there was a 5.6% increase in ED presentations. The total ED presentations in 2017 were 44,466. There were 1,772 births, slightly down on the previous year and inpatient discharges were 15,415. There was a significant increase in Day Cases, 10,774 cases seen. In January and February 2018, ED presentations have increased at a rate of 8% on the previous year. The hospital is continuing to manage these challenges and hopes to deliver its service in 2018 within the funding envelope.

With regard to capital developments, the hospital is awaiting the progression to Cost Benefit Analysis of a 75 in-patient Medical Unit to replace the current block, built in the 1970s, and an MRI Suite at the hospital is being progressed through the Ireland East Hospital Group.

Wexford General Hospital has been successful in recruiting nurses over the last twelve months and is currently recruiting some additional Consultant posts, in particular Physicians in Endocrinology and Gastroenterology, and is also increasing its Radiology establishment.

Wexford General Hospital continues to work within its allocation despite the continuous pressures and challenges. Isolation facilities are having an impact on private income and this will impact the financial outcome of the hospital in 2018, as it did in 2017. Ms. Byrnes also acknowledged the commitment of the local community and statutory services to Wexford General Hospital during the recent severe weather. It was noted that the weather event was more severe in Wexford than in other counties in the South East/South West and the supports given were exceptional.

4. Reports by Chairpersons of Committees

(a) South East Committee Meeting held on 23.01.2018 in Kilkenny

(b) South West Committee Meeting held on 25.01.2018 in Mallow

The reports of both meetings were taken as read.

The next Committee meetings will be:

- (a) South East Committee Meeting on 10.04.2018 in Kilkenny
- (a) South West Committee Meeting on 12.04.2018 in Tralee

5. Notices of Motion

(a) Cllr. Breda Gardner moved the following Motion, standing in her name:

“That the Regional Health Forum writes to Minister of Health, Simon Harris, the Tasoiseach, Leo Varaker and all the TDs in the South East, Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford, Waterford and Tipperary to ask for their help and support in implementing 24/7 Cardiac Care Services in University Hospital Waterford now. And if not why not?”

A written response from Mr Richard Dooley, General Manager University Hospital Waterford, South/South West Hospital Group, was circulated to members and noted. Cllr. Gardner expressed thanks for the reply but she feels that lives are still in danger after 5 pm. The 24/7 cover is needed now and she proposed the motion that the HSE South Forum would write to all TDs and Senators in the South East seeking their support at the Oireachtas.

Cllr. Davy Daniels seconded the proposal and noted that the issue had been ongoing for too long while the population in the South East continues to increase. He felt the ongoing review was unnecessary and the service should be made available. Cllr. Malone supported the motion and noted with regret that efforts to meet the Minister since May 2017 to discuss the trolley problem had been unsuccessful.

Cllr. Mary Linehan-Foley supported the previous contributors and felt the onus was on the Minister to answer the Forum members’ questions. She also wondered if the absence of a second Cath Lab would put more pressure on the CUH service. Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald noted that the Mobile Unit is only at UHW on a temporary basis and that the 24/7 service is what is required. Cllr. Tom Wood supported the motion and wondered if the Minister or the HSE is responsible for making the decision. The acting Chairperson, Cllr. Jason Murphy, supported the motion.

In response, Dr. Ger O’ Callaghan advised that the national review is in progress, the mobile unit has been retained to April 25th, CUH has spare capacity to provide the service, responsibility for decision making is with the Government and the HSE is implementing its policy on this issue. The Herity Report was adopted by the Dept. of Health and is Government policy. Funding has been provided for 3 additional Cath Lab sessions at UHW and when the necessary staff are recruited the Management will arrange how and when these sessions will be provided. Recruitment is in progress and it is anticipated they will be in place by the end of April.

It was agreed unanimously to support Cllr. Gardner’s motion.

(b) Cllr. John Joe Culloty moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

“To call on the HSE to provide a minimum of 35 extra beds at University Hospital Kerry.”

A written response from Mr. Fearghal Grimes, General Manager, University Hospital Kerry was circulated to members and noted. Cllr. Brendan Cronin supported the motion.

Dr. Ger O' Callaghan noted that there had been a huge surge across the country over the previous two weeks and work had been done internally to create extra beds using the Stroke Unit and Frail Elderly Unit. Funding had been received to keep them open and a case was made by the South/South West Hospital Group for 31 additional beds at UHK, in response to the National Capacity Review. A formal response is expected in the next few weeks.

(c) Cllr. Jason Murphy moved the following Motion, standing in his name:

"That this Forum would request why the decision was made by the HSE and Minister to supply the FreeStyle Libre to Children and young Adults on Multiple Daily injections? Why is everyone else being discriminated against and not given access to the FreeStyle Libre? Why are children and young adults on a pump, also being discriminated against?"

A written response from Mr. Kieran Healy, PCRS, was circulated to members and noted. Cllr. Murphy acknowledged the information provided.

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

"In welcoming the recent announcement of a €50 million cash injection to help secure the future of South Tipperary General Hospital I call on Management to outline what developments are envisaged and the timeline for same."

A written response from Ms Maria Barry, General Manager, South Tipperary General Hospital was circulated to members and noted.

In relation to the five items listed in the response, Dr. Ger O' Callaghan clarified the current status of each project.

(e) In the absence of Cllr. Damian Quigg the following Motion was deferred to the next meeting:

"That this Forum support my call, for Minister Simon Harris to address the process around the elected members of the Regional Health Forums function within the Forum, and the need for reserved functions to be given to the elected members so as to ensure that there is a greater and more efficient level of accountability within the HSE, the Status Quo simply isn't working and requires an immediate review."

(f) Cllr. Mary Rose Desmond moved the following Motion, standing in her name:

"That this Forum would be provided with details of the number of children and adolescents in the Cork/Kerry Community Healthcare Region who are currently awaiting assessment and appointments with CAMHS teams and the length of time they are waiting."

A written response from Mr. Ger Reaney, Chief Officer, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr. Desmond felt that the problem was not being addressed properly. She thought that the pathway for Clinical Psychology students to finalise their qualifications is lacking and that their presence in the service is vital, if exceptionally vulnerable children are to be helped. She insisted that the DOH has to lead the way in securing and funding the staffing.

Ms. Sinead Glennon detailed the work that has been done and is ongoing by the HSE to improve the situation despite difficulties in recruiting Consultants. Additional clinical posts 7.5 were approved for the Cork and Kerry area. One commenced this week and the remaining six will be taking up duty between April and July. The UCC based Clinical Psychology course is progressing and there will be graduates available in September 2019.

Regarding the Eating Disorder team it is intended to recruit the Consultant, Clinical Psychologist and Dietician in the first instance and work from there as other members are appointed.

Note

Prior to the Members' Questions, Cllr. Joe Sullivan asked the Forum to note the tremendous efforts of HSE and other Public Service staff during the recent spell of severe weather. He insisted that they did an excellent job. All members agreed with the sentiments.

6. Questions

(a) Cllr. John Sheehan put the following question:

"Can the HSE confirm that a patient who receives medical care abroad under the EU Cross Border Health Care Directive is entitled to follow up care and treatment (including Physiotherapy for orthopaedic surgery) under the legislation as it currently stands."

A written response from Ms. Catherine Donohoe, General Manager, Commercial Unit, Acute Hospital Services, HSE, was circulated to the members and noted, in the absence of Cllr. Sheehan.

(b) Cllr. Breda Gardner put forward the following question:

"Now that the Minister of Health has acknowledged that it is a HSE decision, what does the HSE propose to do to implement Boards of Management to each hospital in the South East?"

A written response from Dr. Gerard O'Callaghan was circulated to members and noted.

In response to a request from Cllr. Gardner for further clarification, Dr. O' Callaghan explained the system in Health Boards and Voluntary Hospitals and how the HSE is different with the Forum having an advisory function whereas Health Boards held the CEO to account. Each Hospital has a Manager and an inclusive Executive Management Board generally around 10 members. All Hospital Groups then have a chairperson and members who are appointed by the Minister for Health. He outlined the background of the current SSWHG Board members, and advised that Managers report to the Group

Chair. Ireland East Group, which includes St Luke's Hospital Kilkenny and Wexford General Hospital, has its own Chair and members, similar to the SSWHH structure.

(c) Cllr. John Joe Culloty put forward the following question:

"What is the current position regarding the review of scans at University Hospital Kerry?"

Taken with

(f) Cllr. Damian Quigg put forward the following question:

"I call on the HSE to clarify for me, How many people carry out and oversee the scanning of images process at UHK, both prior to the Mis-diagnosis controversy and currently?"

A written response from Mr. Fearghal Grimes, General Manager, University Hospital Kerry was circulated to members and noted.

Dr. Gerard O' Callaghan clarified some items in the response and confirmed that 13 patients will be seen in the next week or two, an independent Radiologist has reviewed the look back process to ensure no errors were made and the SSWHG has reported to the Irish Medical Council. All serious cases discovered were notified immediately.

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

"What do the HSE plan to do with St Raphael's building in Youghal when it is vacant next year after residents have been re-housed, could it be looked at for respite for East Cork Area, bearing in mind a million was spent on it renovating few years ago."

A written response from Mr. Ger Reaney was circulated to members and noted. Cllr. Lenihan-Foley asked that the building would be preserved in view of its long history and recent investment, and possibly be considered for worthwhile use, such as the provision of respite services in East Cork.

Ms Sinead Glennon confirmed that some HSE services will be provided in St. Raphael's Centre until 2019. All HSE Services and Voluntary Groups are welcome to make submissions outlining their accommodation needs which will assist future use of this site. The HSE will be examining the needs in the area, before making any decisions.

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

"Who officially signed off on the decision to provide 92 beds in a new Community Nursing Unit in Cashel and 50 beds at Saint Anthony's, Clonmel, to satisfy HIQA standards and has HIQA been informed of the decision?"

A written response from Ms. Aileen Colley, Chief Officer, CHO5, was circulated to members and noted.

Cllr. Wood asked if the Head of Service for Social Care has signed off on the decision and if a representative of the Estates service could attend a future South East Committee meeting to discuss future plans in South Tipperary.

In response, Dr. Derval Howley, Head of Service, Health & Wellbeing, attending the meeting on behalf of Ms. Aileen Colley, Chief Officer, CHO 5, confirmed that the Head of Service made the decision about the beds on the basis of the evidence from the options appraisal and that HIQA was informed.

(g) Cllr. Mary Rose Desmond put forward the following question:

"To ask if the 2018 emergency funding allocation for Cork Kerry Community Healthcare has been received from the HSE. If so, what funding was granted and if not, when is this funding due to be received?"

A written response from Mr. Ger Reaney was circulated to members and noted. Cllr. Desmond asked if the funding allocation has been received and Ms. Sinead Glennon confirmed that 16 % had been allocated to date, drawn down on an individual basis, from the E2.2 m indicative budget 2018. She added that the allocation will meet urgent case needs in 2018. Ms. Glennon confirmed that the HSE is working on a plan for the future and will be seeking increased funding.

7. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 17th May 2018, at 2pm in Council Chambers, County Hall, Cork.

The Chairman asked members to note the foregoing arrangements.