

REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM

Chairperson,
Cllr. John Buttimer

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MINUTES - MEETING OF REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM SOUTH

Thursday 19th February 2015 @ 2pm
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNTY HALL, CORK

Present:

Cllr. James Brown
Cllr. Mary Butler
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. Pat Fitzgerald
Cllr. Denis Foley
Cllr. Deirdre Forde
Cllr. Breda Gardner
Cllr. Imelda Goldsboro
Cllr. Joe Harris
Cllr. Danny Healy-Rae
Cllr. Mary Hanna Hourigan
Cllr. Mike Kennelly

Cllr. George Lawlor
Cllr. Mary Linehan Foley
Cllr. Joe Malone
Cllr. Michael McCarthy
Cllr. Rachel McCarthy
Cllr. Louise McLoughlin
Cllr. Jason Murphy
Cllr. Bobby O'Connell
Cllr. Aaron O'Sullivan
Cllr. John Pender
Cllr. Seanie Power
Cllr. Damian Quigg
Cllr. William Quinn
Cllr. Bob Ryan
Cllr. Mary Shields
Cllr. Frank Staples
Cllr. Joe Sullivan

Apologies:

Cllr. Liam Brazil
Cllr. John Buttimer (Chairperson)

Cllr. Dr. John Sheehan
Cllr. Tom Wood

In Attendance:

Mr. Gerry O'Dwyer, CEO, South/South West Hospitals Group
Mr. Ger O' Callaghan, Chief Operations Officer, South/South West Hospitals Group
Mr. Ger Reaney, Chief Officer, CHO, Cork & Kerry Area 4.
Ms. Anna-Marie Lanigan, Area Manager, South East Primary Community & Continuing Care Services
Ms. Angie O'Brien, Area Communications Manager, HSE South
Mr Brendan Crowley, Operations Performance Manager, National Ambulance Service
Ms. Anne Slattery, General Manager, St Luke's Hospital, Kilkenny
Members of the HSE South Forum Office staff

In the unavoidable absence of the Chairperson, Cllr. John Buttimer and because the Vice Chair, Cllr. Denis Foley, was obliged to leave the meeting early, it was agreed by the party whips that Cllr. Timmy Collins would chair today's meeting.

1. **Adoption of the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 20th November 2014**
On the proposal of Cllr. Bobby O' Connell, seconded by Cllr. Denis Foley, the Minutes of the Forum meeting held, on Thursday, November 20th 2014, were approved and adopted by members.
2. **Chairperson's Correspondence**
There was no correspondence to consider but before the commencement of the meeting, the acting Chairperson advised members that, following the presentations by HSE Management on the Operational Plans for 2015, he would limit the number of questions on each and requested the members to keep their contributions brief.
3. **Presentations on Operational Plan 2015**
(Copies of each were circulated to the members, prior to the meeting)
 - A) ***Ms. Anna Marie Lanigan, Area Manager, South East Primary Community and Continuing Care***
Ms. Lanigan opened the session by providing an overview of the National Service Plan 2015. The National Health budget will be €12,131m with a workforce of 97,000 and she advised that health services are organised by Division – Mental Health, Primary Care, Acute Hospitals, Health & Well Being and Social Care. She explained the NSP themes embedded in each of these Operational Plans and summarised the Governance arrangements, which rule the Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) services.

Ms. Lanigan then explained the South East Area plan for 2015, with reference to the budget of €372.654m, the staffing of 3,921, population served of almost 500,000 and the service enhancement agenda under Quality & Patient Safety, Primary Care Services, Health & Well Being, Social Inclusion, Older People, Disability Services, Mental Health and Capital priorities. Ms. Lanigan highlighted the significant focus on making the transition from ECF/ Moratorium to targeted improvement within allocated pay frameworks. The conversion of Agency staff costs into a sustainable workforce is also a significant policy decision. The Accountability Framework covering Financial Performance, Quality & Safety, Activity and Access to services is also a key theme for 2015.
 - B) ***Mr Ger Reaney, Area Manager, HSE Cork & Kerry Primary Community and Continuing Care Services***
Mr Reaney made a presentation in respect of the Cork & Kerry Area, covering budget of €536m, staffing 6,099 plus others in Mental Health & Disability Services, service enhancements 2014, plans for 2015 under Mental Health, Primary Care, Social Inclusion, Health & Well Being, Older People and Disability Services. Some of the new services highlighted were a 40 bed Community Mental Health Nursing Unit in Killarney, another Primary Care centre opening at Charleville and progress with others, provision of ultrasound in primary care centres, mental health supports for Travellers, enhanced support for Homeless Services, tobacco free locations, supporting older people to live at home, Dementia Projects in Kinsale, Mallow and Mercy University Hospital, opening 8 beds in West Kerry Community Hospital and additional multi-disciplinary posts for children with disabilities.
 - C) ***Mr. Ger O' Callaghan, Chief Operations Officer, South/South West Hospitals Group***
Mr O' Callaghan made a presentation on the SSWHG Operational Plan 2015, which incorporated statistical detail of population served, 800,000, the budget of €685,282m,

staffing 8,859, bed numbers 2,139 inpatient and 382 day and hospital activity within the group for 2014, details of links with other service national policies, key performance indicators and the challenges faced.

4. Questions and Answers

A) Following her presentation, the following questions were asked by members and answered by Ms. Lanigan:

- **Cllr Gardner** asked if holistic therapies and orthodox medicine could work together and if the HSE could take positive action to empower people to heal themselves. In response Ms. Lanigan advised that health options are a personal choice and if attending a GP or being treated in hospital, patients will generally follow the clinical advice given, including the medication prescribed.
- **Cllr Butler** asked if Home Care packages would be increased to free up hospital beds. Ms Lanigan advised that some of the national allocation of €5m for Intensive Home Care Packages, under the Home Care & Community Support side of Social Care would be coming to Waterford, but the amount is not confirmed.
- **Cllr Fitzgerald** spoke about the pressure on step down beds in the community and asked if they could be funded better and given more support. He also felt that HIQA needed to change their focus when inspecting these valuable voluntary centres which are different to Nursing Homes.

Ms Lanigan confirmed that HSE management are involved in addressing the ongoing needs of these local units, including the Holy Ghost in Waterford and have been working with the National Directorate on the funding and HIQA issues.

- **Cllr Browne** raised a question about the accuracy of county populations listed by the CSO 2011 Census and those given in documentation today. Ms. Lanigan explained that the population differences related to some counties not retaining their borders for Community Care area catchment purposes. There are some local adjustments, involving Kilkenny, Waterford and Tipperary, but the overall South East population is consistent with the CSO figures.

B) Following his presentation, the following questions were asked by members and answered by Mr. Reaney:

- **Cllr Forde** asked if there would be improvements in respite care for adults with Disability and if there would be further progress on Primary Care Centres in 2015. She had also been told that there are not enough hours in the home help service.

Mr Reaney advised that respite care is provided within the budget available. The service improvement teams are in place to ensure that resources are utilised to maximum effect. However, due to increased levels of need, Disability is one area where additional resources would be helpful. In relation to Primary Care Centres, a centre will open in Charleville this year. A proposal is being worked on at Carrigaline and it is hoped that a facility will be available there next year. Other developments are progressing within the Cork/Kerry CHO. In relation to Home Help hours he advised that there is continuous assessment of this service and sometimes there is a difference between what clients think they need and what the HSE considers sufficient. 100% of Cork/Kerry is now covered by the South DOC out of hours GP service.

- **Cllr. Culloty** asked for details about consumer panels and if it was intended to provide more residential step down facilities and home care packages for patients who need them. He also asked about recruitment challenges.

Mr Reaney advised that there are Consumer panels across the range of health services and have been in the Mental Health area for some time. The panel members include service users who are in a position to provide feedback from their own experiences and this information assists Managers in addressing any aspects which have proved unsatisfactory. He confirmed that the HSE works with the resources it has as equitably as possible. The HSE is always mindful of the cost of care and needs to transfer more patients to Community Hospitals. The care hours identified are 40% nursing & 60% home care which would achieve the required balance based on certain dependency levels. Mr Reaney noted that there is a significant Home Care Package percentage from the national total currently available in the South West.

Cllr. Culloty was advised of the challenge to fill some Consultant posts in Mental Health and that the HSE had invested heavily in that service, over recent years and trained staff were not always available to meet the pace of growth. Mr Reaney also confirmed that nursing recruitment has been ongoing during the past few years and that there are further opportunities arising, due to the ending of the recruitment moratorium.

- **Cllr. Cremin** asked about the timeframe to have all Primary Care Centres in the area working and what percentage are currently functioning. He also enquired if there was any PCC planned for South West of Cork City.

Mr Reaney advised that about 35 to 40% of the population have access to a Primary Care Centre. Other centres are at various stages of planning. He explained the three models which exist; Public Capital, Public Private Mix and Leasing from the Private Sector. At present, submissions are being considered from developers following the national advertising last year. It must be noted that such developments will only proceed, if a GP commitment exists to operate from the premises.

- **Cllr. Desmond** asked if there is an opening date for the 50 bed Mental Health Unit at CUH. She also sought clarification on the number of units open for older people at Farranlea Road to help reduce hospitalisation.

In response, Mr Reaney advised that HSE Management are in negotiations with staff associations regarding the staffing levels required to operate the unit and it is expected that agreement will be reached soon.

In relation to Farranlee, he confirmed that nurses are currently being recruited to open additional beds. There are 67 beds available at present and this will increase to 75 in the coming weeks.

- **Cllr. McCarthy** asked about the status of the new Community Hospital at Bandon. Mr Reaney advised that environmental defects highlighted by HIQA were typical of problems in all Community Hospitals. He confirmed that he is currently working with Estates to ensure re-registration of all community hospitals. Funding is available for this project. A total of €250,000 was provided last year for design work and funding is available to redevelop around the current 23 beds to ensure the premises meets HIQA standards. A commencement date of Quarter 3 2015 has been agreed.
- **Cllr. Harris** having acknowledged the excellent presentation sought information about the number of Mental Health patients presenting for admission who are not admitted because of a shortage of beds and referred back to their GPs.

In response Mr Reaney said that he wasn't aware of any significant numbers requiring admission to an acute unit who were not facilitated. Statistically about 20% to 25% of these beds are unused and access is not a common problem.

- **Cllr Healy Rea** noted that there were no additional short stay beds being provided to reduce pressure at Kerry General Hospital. He said that the assessment units are full, ambulances are backing up and it is vital to provide beds in Dingle and Kenmare. He also asked about a new drug which has been used in the USA for MS patients.

Mr Reaney confirmed that an assessment bed provision in Kerry indicated a greater demand for long stay rather than short stay beds to accommodate older people. Dingle and Kenmare have a significant level of short stay beds. There were 9 Delayed Discharges in KGH the previous night, most of whom were awaiting a long stay bed, and the HSE is continuing to work on the provision of long stay beds. In regard to the MS drug Mr Reaney advised that its availability here would be decided at national level.

C) Following his presentation, the following question was asked and answered by Mr O' Callaghan:

- **Cllr. Cremin** wondered why the percentage between pay and non pay expenditure varied significantly in the Hospital Budgets. Mr O' Callaghan advised that among the reasons were the high cost of orthopaedic implants in major hospitals, the expensive Cardiology work, the use of particularly expensive prescribed drugs and the provision of Oncology Services.

OTHER QUESTIONS

- **Cllr. Malone** asked about the HSE's future plans for Kilcreene Regional Orthopaedic Hospital having heard its reported closure discussed on local Radio this morning. The role of HIQA in the decision had also been mentioned.

In response the Group CEO, Mr O' Dwyer, advised that HIQA had not engaged with the SSWHG re the closure of Kilcreene and no discussions have taken place between HIQA and the group management re this issue. Discussions are ongoing within the National Clinical Programmes on how best to deliver Orthopaedic services into the future at a group level.

Detailed discussions on this matter will take place at the upcoming South East Committee Meeting. This will be part of a consultation process, involving a wide range of stakeholders into the future. Mr O' Dwyer insisted that the SSWHG wants to provide the most comprehensive Orthopaedic service possible at the highest quality and lowest level of risk.

Cllr Butler asked if this amalgamation proposal will compound the current problem of long waiting times at UHW. She also sought confirmation that the 430 Inpatient beds at UHW are all open and that every approved Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon post is filled.

Mr. O'Dwyer responded to the issues raised and stated that he will give a full report at the South East Committee meeting and keep members apprised of the situation.

5. **Date and time of next meeting**

Thursday, March 26th 2015, at 2 pm, Council Chambers, County Hall, Cork.

Prior to the conclusion of the meeting, the Acting Chairperson reiterated the comments of the members and thanked the HSE Managers for their detailed and well presented plans. He also acknowledged the members' co-operation, in clearing the day's agenda.