

REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM

**Chairperson,
Cllr. John Buttimer**

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MINUTES - MEETING OF REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM SOUTH

**Thursday 20th November 2014 @ 2pm
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNTY HALL, CORK**

Present:

Cllr James Browne
Cllr John Buttimer Chairperson
Cllr John A Collins
Cllr Timmy Collins
Cllr Henry Cremin
Cllr John Joe Culloty
Cllr Davy Daniels
Cllr Michael Doyle
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 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 John Sheehan
Cllr Mary Shields
Cllr Frank Staples
Cllr Joe Sullivan
Cllr Tom Wood

Apologies:

Cllr Liam Brazil
Cllr Mary Butler
Cllr Mary Rose Desmond
Cllr Pat Fitzgerald

Cllr Jason Murphy
Cllr Mary Shields
Cllr Joe Sullivan

In Attendance:

Mr. Gerry O' Dwyer, CEO, South/South West Hospitals Group
Mr. Ger Reaney, Area Manager, HSE Cork & Kerry Primary Community and Continuing Care Services
Mr. Tony McNamara, CEO, Cork Hospital Group
Mr. Chris Monahan, General Manager, Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary Primary, Community and Continuing Care Services
Ms. Angie O' Brien, Area Communications Manager, HSE South
Ms. Sinead Byrne, Manager, Regional Health Forum, South

1. Adoption of the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 18th of September 2014

On the proposal of Cllr. Bobby O' Connell and seconded by Cllr. John Joe Cullotty, the Minutes of the Forum Meeting held on Thursday the 18th of September 2014, were adopted and approved by the members.

2. Chairperson's Correspondence

- A)** Mr. Gerry O' Dwyer confirmed that following discussion of the Notices of Motion from Cllr. Damian Quigg, 4(b) and Cllr. Henry Cremin 5(g) at the September meeting, a letter had been written to the Minister for Health and the PCRS regarding difficulties encountered in the renewal of Medical Cards and problems for Forum members in trying to establish current status. An acknowledgement has been received from the Minister's office and Ms. Anna-Marie Lanigan has also issued an invitation to the PCRS to discuss the matter at an upcoming Committee meeting.
- B)** Mr. Gerry O' Dwyer advised that expressions of interest had been sought in respect of the provision of Primary Care infrastructure in the HSE South Area and details had been emailed to members today.

3. Committees

Reports by Chairpersons of the

- (a) HSE South West Committee
- (b) HSE South East Committee

Meetings were held on the 21st and 23rd of October 2014

The Chairperson of the HSE South Forum, having congratulated the recently elected Chairs of the two committees, asked if the reports of the meetings could be taken as read and this was agreed. The Chairperson noted that the next committee meetings are scheduled for December 11th (South West) and December 16th (South East).

4. Notices of Motion

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

"To ask that more beds be made operational in our Community Hospitals in Kerry"

A written response from Mr. Ger Reaney, Area Manager HSE Cork was circulated and considered. Mr. Reaney advised that the beds available are broadly in line with national norms but there are some issues in rural areas. The possibility of increasing the number of beds in West Kerry and Kenmare is being considered, subject to HIQA approval and availability of funding.

Cllr. Healy Rae pointed out that more community beds in Kenmare and Dingle would relieve pressure on Kerry General Hospital's acute beds and that both towns serve a large catchment area and are a long way from Tralee. He appealed to the HSE to help vulnerable and sick people by increasing the beds available in Dingle and Kenmare. He pointed out that a site had been donated in Dingle for this purpose.

Mr. Reaney advised that Killarney may be considered at a later date, that Kenmare is relatively straightforward as its accommodation meets HIQA standards, but that discussions will be necessary with HIQA in respect of additional beds in West Kerry. Such decisions will also be subject to funding being available.

- (b) Cllr. Mary Lenihan- Foley moved the following Notice of Motion standing in her name:

"That the HSE South outline their support for the "Blood Bike South" initiative who will provide a voluntary out of hours motorcycle rider service to transport blood and other medical materials between hospitals and other health facilities to help save lives and reduce costs to our hospitals"

A written reply from Mr. Gerry O' Dwyer, CEO South/South West Hospitals Group, was circulated and noted by the members. He confirmed that the HSE supports the project and there is ongoing discussion with the 'Blood Bike South' organisation and that further meetings will be held in 2015. At present some hospitals are tied to contractual arrangements. Mr O' Dwyer will arrange for a presentation on this service at a Committee meeting in 2015. Cllr. Lenihan-Foley confirmed her support for this initiative and expressed her satisfaction with the reply provided.

- (c) Cllr. Tom Wood moved the following Notice of Motion standing in his name:

"That this Forum calls for the abolition of the unfair rehabilitation and respite charges affecting people when they are most vulnerable and introduced without appropriate consultation with the relevant parties."

A written reply from Ms. Anna-Marie Lanigan was circulated and considered.

Cllr. Wood expressed his disappointment that the rehabilitation and respite charges are now being applied. He felt that these charges were unfair to elderly vulnerable people, that there wasn't an awareness of their introduction and that there is no appeal system to challenge liability. He called on the HSE to abolish the charges.

In response Mr. Chris Monahan confirmed that the charges are levied in accordance with HSE directions from March 2013 under the Health (Charges for In-Patient Services) Regulations 2005-2011. When a particular case was raised he further advised that discharge plans are agreed in all cases between the Acute and PCCC service and Mr. Reaney detailed the range of services available to people who are convalescing. The Chairman confirmed to Cllr. Wood that all Notices of

Motion from Forum meetings are sent to the Director General of the HSE and the Minister for Health.

- (d) Cllr. David Daniels moved the following Notice of Motion standing in his name:

“That funding be provided in the 2015 budget for the provision of the 24 hour cardiac cover at University Hospital Waterford”.

A written response from Mr. Gerry O’ Dwyer was circulated and discussed. Mr. O’ Dwyer emphasised that the HSE would need 6/7 Consultants to operate a 24/7 Cardiac service at UHW. This service is being linked with the National Programme and he confirmed the HSE commitment to developing the service over the next two years, subject to funding being provided in the respective Service Plans. He will liaise with the National Clinical Programmes on this Service.

Cllr. Daniels thanked Mr. O’ Dwyer for his reply and advised that Waterford City & County Council has recently passed a Notice of Motion calling for the necessary funding to be provided. He highlighted the local concerns after 5 pm and called on HSE management to provide the service.

- (e) Cllr. John Buttimer moved the following Notice of Motion standing in his name:

“That the HSE would publish a full and comprehensive report on; HSE run programmes and initiatives to deal with the issue of suicide in Cork, the model of service provision and the outcomes of such initiatives; the voluntary sector bodies that the HSE supports in Cork through direct or indirect funding or the allocation of staff and other resources, that it would publish the names of these groups and would outline the activities undertaken of these groups, the model of service provision of these groups, what audit or review of efficacy is undertaken either internally or externally, and; measures to ensure equal provision across the county to support people who present with suicidal ideation.”

A written response from Mr. Ger Reaney was circulated and considered. Cllr. Buttimer thanked Mr. Reaney for the comprehensive report and acknowledged the range and access of support services. Following some discussion Mr. Reaney summarised that there are no geographical black spots in terms of access to services or supports, the effectiveness of certain response are driven by a high level of interest from community groups. Broadly speaking, these services were working well and there was a level of satisfaction with what was being provided. He noted that while there hasn’t been a significant reduction in the number of suicides in the past few years, community groups are trying to address the problem in their own areas. The support provided is bringing the HSE and Voluntary Agencies together in a collaborative approach. The cross training and ongoing engagement are proving very effective. The subject of suicide is now being made more comfortable for everyone to discuss and any further education initiatives led by the Dept. of Education would be supported by

the HSE. Ms. Sinead Byrne will contact the Regional Suicide Resource Office to secure statistics on suicides in the area in recent years.

In conclusion, the Chairperson Cllr. Buttimer, acknowledged that the HSE is the lead partner in community areas and that it has been running proactive programmes throughout the HSE South catchment area. He expressed satisfaction at the quality and availability of the service and was encouraged by the variety of groups which receive funding from the HSE. He stressed the importance of reviewing the effectiveness of all service providers.

- (f) Cllr. John Joe Culloty moved the following Notice of Motion standing in his name:

“As funding for respite and residential provision in South Kerry has been significantly and disproportionately reduced in the past 5 years, to call on the HSE to immediately increase funding to provide the people in this area with an essential service that they are entitled to.”

A written response from Mr. Ger Reaney was circulated and considered. Mr. Reaney advised that an issue had arisen with one client requiring fulltime care who was placed in a respite bed; this resulted in a decrease in the respite beds available. He advised that the matter would be resolved in the coming weeks and then 2 respite beds would be available to the clients in that area. Cllr. Culloty acknowledged the report but was concerned that 2 extra beds would not make a significant improvement. He advised of cases of concern and asked if people concerned could meet with Mr. Reaney to discuss their concerns.

In response Mr. Reaney explained some of the problems which had arisen which could not be resolved immediately by the HSE. In respect of St. Francis School he confirmed that each family was offered a meeting after the Multi Disciplinary Team assessment of the children and the feedback was generally positive. A Review Group has been established which includes a Senior HSE Manager in Kerry, who meets with representatives of the service provider, the school and parents. The majority of families are happy with progress but a small number have some outstanding requirements.

Cllr. Culloty emphasised the value of respite services for a family providing support to a son or daughter with a disability. He asked that the HSE would ensure the concerns of all families would be listened to. Mr. Reaney advised that the respite solution will be in place in approximately two weeks time and emphasised that the availability of these 2 beds will benefit a significant number of children and their families. He asked for details of the adult respite case which was highlighted by Cllr. Culloty for review and response.

- (g) Cllr James Browne moved the following Notice of Motion standing in his name:

“That this Forum calls on the HSE to make the provision of a 24 hour 7 day a week acute psychiatric unit for the County of Wexford a priority. Wexford has a population of 146,000 people and is

growing. In addition it has approximately 50,000 additional people in the summer time who are medium term holiday makers. The population of Wexford justifies its own acute unit and this would have the added benefit of releasing the pressure on the services in Waterford”.

A written response from Ms. Anna- Maria Lanigan was circulated and considered. Cllr. Browne highlighted the rising Wexford population of 150,000 normally with a seasonal influx of 50,000 visitors and the need for a locally based Psychiatrist to be available on a 24 hour, 7 day basis with reference to the high suicide rates in the county. He felt the present arrangements are unsatisfactory and it is unfair on people who must travel to Wicklow or Waterford if they need to see a Consultant Psychiatrist outside normal working hours.

In response, Mr. Monahan advised of the work done by the liaison staff at Wexford General Hospital when a psychiatric referral is made out of hours. A further report will be compiled for Cllr. Browne by Ms. Anna Maria Lanigan.

5. Questions

(a) Cllr. Mary Lenihan–Foley put forward the following Question:

“To ask for a full update on South Doc in East Cork area, since the South Doc Scheme has been rolled out we have had no updates on how it is working or not working, bearing in mind if you don’t live in Midleton area you have to travel to see a doctor after hours or weekends, this entails a 20 minute or more journey for the sick, young and elderly. We need this looked at as a matter of urgency.”

A written response from Mr. Ger Reaney was circulated and considered. Cllr. Lenihan-Foley thanked Mr. Reaney for the information but insisted that there are some problems in the Youghal area which need to be addressed. She noted that a drive from Youghal to Midleton could take 20 to 25 minutes and this is not satisfactory. In response, Mr. Reaney detailed the benefits of the SouthDoc initiative and noted that it is particularly well utilised between 6 pm and 11 pm. He said that a 20 minute drive is not unusual in other out of hours GP services and explained the constraints on the extent to which GPs can provide the service in Youghal out of hours, with reference to their on call rosters and the numbers participating. He agreed to arrange a meeting with Forum members and SouthDoc for those who wish to discuss the East Cork service.

(b) Cllr. Tom Wood put forward the following Question:

“Will step down beds be available at Our Lady’s Hospital complex Cashel, over the coming months to relieve overcrowding at South Tipperary General Hospital, Clonmel ?”

A written response from Ms. Anna Marie Lanigan was circulated to the members. Cllr. Wood was not satisfied with the answer and it was agreed that Ms. Lanigan (who had tried unsuccessfully to contact Cllr. Wood by

telephone today) would discuss the issue directly with Cllr. Wood as soon as possible.

- (c) Cllr. John Sheehan put forward the following Question:

“Can the Chief Executive Officer, Cork University Hospital (CUH) provide assurance that the quality of the Laboratory services provided by CUH meet the highest clinical standards and best practice in quality control ?”

A lengthy written response from Mr. Tony McNamara, CEO, Cork Hospital Group, was circulated. He highlighted some key points to Cllr. Sheehan and praised all of the CUH team who were involved in earning INAB accreditation following an arduous process, which included a six person inspection last month. CUH Laboratories handle 2 million samples per annum and the Laboratory Quality Management System was detailed in a diagram in his report to members.

Cllr. Sheehan thanked Mr. McNamara for his report and offered congratulations to the staff, who had worked so hard to achieve accreditation. The Chairperson associated himself with the thanks and good wishes. Mr. McNamara agreed to make Laboratory Accreditation Reports available to the Forum members.

- (d) Cllr. John Buttimer put forward the following Question:

“To ask the HSE what medical and surgical provision is made for children in the HSE South (and Cork in particular) for children who suffer with spinal disorders such as Scoliosis or curvature of the spine , the number of children presenting with such conditions, the number and locations of available consultants, the number of children awaiting surgery, the average length of time waiting for surgery and what measures are being taken to ensure that children waitlisted for surgery in Our Lady’s Children’s Hospital Crumlin are seen in a timely and efficient manner and if there are any plans to introduce a surgery for such conditions in Cork ?”

A written response from Mr. Gerry O’ Dwyer, CEO, South/South West Hospitals Group was circulated and considered. Mr. O’ Dwyer noted that there are 181 children on the waiting list at present and that the national decision was to centralise the service in one Dublin based location. He has been making representations about the children from the HSE South area and is hopeful that additional resources will be provided, in the 2015 Service Plan, to clear the backlog. Cllr. Buttimer advised of parental difficulties about establishing dates for surgery or current waiting list position and the affect on their quality of life. In conclusion Mr. O’ Dwyer undertook to continue his discussions with the National Childrens Hospital with a view to having HSE South based children seen as soon as possible. He will advise the Chairperson of progress.

- (e) Cllr. John Joe Culloty put forward the following Question:

“As there is an embargo in recruitment in the HSE South have there been any promotions, pay increases or bonuses given to management staff in the past two years?”

A written response from Ms. Tess O’ Donovan, Assistant National Director, Human Resources, HSE South was circulated. Mr. O’ Dwyer advised that recruitment of nursing staff including specialists is ongoing and these posts are advertised by the National Recruitment Service. There are also some vacancies at CUH which are being filled at present. No bonuses were paid to HSE South management or staff and all were remunerated in accordance with approved pay scales. Mr. O’ Dwyer confirmed that the respective staff associations are aware of the situation. Cllr. Culloty noted the contents of the reply.

- (f) Cllr. James Browne put forward the following Question:

“To ask the HSE how many HSE Orthodontists are based in the County of Wexford? How many of these are permanent? Are there currently any vacant posts and if so when will these be filled? How many people resident in Wexford are currently on the waiting list for treatment from an Orthodontist: how many of these are on the waiting list for over 1 year, 2 years and 3 years? How long has the person who is currently the longest waiting on the list been waiting?”

A written response from Ms. Anna Marie Lanigan was circulated to members. It was noted that the longest waiting patient is from January 2011. Mr Chris Monahan acknowledged these pressures and concentration on assessment. Cllr. Browne noted that there are no current vacancies and wondered if psychological issues are considered in the assessment process. Mr. Reaney advised that the objective is to establish the deviation in fitting, with significant correction and minor correction, being the two classifications for treatment. He further advised that psychological issues were taking into account generally in the assessment process.

6. Other Business

In response to Cllr. John Joe Culloty’s request, it was agreed that a presentation on Haemachromatosis would be arranged for a Committee meeting in 2015.

7. Date and time of next meeting

February 2015 (date to be confirmed) at 2pm, in Council Chambers, County Hall, Cork.

The Chairperson advised that the date of this meeting is dependant on the approval of the National Service Plan 2015; Members will be notified as soon as the date is confirmed.

The Chairperson clarified that 6 Forum meetings are held per annum, with the February session reserved for the Service Plan. There will be no Notices of Motion or Questions taken at this meeting.

Following the February Forum meeting, local briefings will be held for Oireachtas and Forum members.

Four committee meetings will be held annually and the 2015 meetings will begin on January 13th (South West) and January 15th (South East).