

## **REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM**

**Chairperson,  
Cllr. John Buttimer**

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### **MINUTES - MEETING OF REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM SOUTH**

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> of July, 2014 @ 1pm  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNTY HALL, CORK**

#### **Present:**

Cllr. Liam Brazil  
Cllr. James Brown  
Cllr. Mary Butler  
Cllr. John Buttimer  
Cllr. John A. Collins  
Cllr. Timmy Collins  
Cllr. Henry Cremin  
Cllr. John Joe Culloty  
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. 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. John Sheehan  
Cllr. Joe Sullivan  
Cllr. Tom Woods

#### **Apologies:**

Cllr. Frank Staples

#### **In Attendance:**

Mr. Brian Kirwan, Regional Director for Performance and Integration South  
Mr. Gerry O'Dwyer, Interim Group CEO, Cork Hospital Group  
Mr. Ger Reaney, Area Manager, HSE Cork  
Mr. Tony McNamara, CEO, Cork Hospital Group  
Ms. Anna-Marie Lanigan, Area Manager, South East Primary, Community and Continuing Care Services,  
Ms. Angie O'Brien, Area Communications Manager, HSE South  
Mr. Michael Norris, Operations Performance Manager, National Ambulance Service  
Ms. Sinéad Byrne, Manager, Regional Health Forum, South  
Ms. Rebecca Loughry, Executive Lead Performance and Integration Regional Health Forum Office staff

**1. Adoption of the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 8th of May, 2014**

At the proposal of Cllr. Bobby O'Connell, seconded by Cllr. John Buttimer, the Minutes of the Forum Meeting held on Thursday the 8<sup>th</sup> of May, 2014 were approved and adopted by Members.

**2. Chairperson's Correspondence**

Cllr. Mary Hanna Hourigan was asked by the Regional Health Forum Office to Chair the meeting until such time as the Chairperson was elected. Cllr. Hourigan welcomed all the Members and HSE Managers to the first meeting of the new Forum. She requested that all mobile phones be turned off as these interfere with the audio system in the Chambers. Cllr. Hourigan requested that all Councillors display their name plate and requested that they identify themselves by name when contributing to discussions.

**Election of Chairperson**

Voting for the roles of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson was by way of show of hands.

Cllr. Hourigan advised that the first matter for consideration was the election of the Chairperson. Cllr. Breda Gardner requested that, prior to a vote taking place, consideration and discussion should take place around expertise, geography and gender balance in terms of the role of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

Cllr. Gardner requested an adjournment to discuss her proposal and a vote was taken by a show of hands. The majority of members voted that there would be no adjournment and voting for the Chairperson's role proceeded.

Cllr. Mary Hannah requested nominations for the position of Chairperson of the Regional Health Forum South. Cllr. John Buttimer was proposed by Cllr. John Collins and was seconded by Cllr. Deirdre Forde. Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald proposed Cllr. Breda Gardner and Cllr. Rachel McCarthy seconded this proposal. As there were two candidates nominated, the members voted for each Councillor by a show of hands; Cllr. John Buttimer was elected as Chairperson by a majority vote.

Cllr. John Buttimer took the Chair and thanked Members for their vote of confidence in him and said that he looked forward to working with all parties and the HSE in a bipartisan way. He advised that the work of the Forum is governed by the Standing Orders and that these would be recirculated to Members.

**Election of Vice-Chairperson**

Nominations were sought for the position of Vice-Chairperson.

Cllr. Denis Foley was proposed by Cllr. Bobby O'Connell and seconded by Cllr. Liam Brazil. Cllr. Pat Sheehan proposed Cllr. Henry Cremin and this proposal was seconded by Cllr. Rachel McCarthy. As there were two candidates nominated, the members voted for each Councillor by a show of hands; Cllr. Denis Foley was elected by a majority vote. Cllr. Foley thanked the Members for their support.

### **3. Discussion on Options for Regional Health Forum Committees**

Reports of Committee Meetings

(a) Acute Hospitals Services and Population Health Committee

(b) PCCC Committee

held on Thursday 10th of April and Thursday 19th of June, 2014

The Reports of the Committee Meetings were taken as read.

Ms. Sinead Byrne, Regional Health Forum Manager, outlined the three options to be considered for decision for the Regional Health Forum Committees going forward which were as follows:-

Option 1:-

Two Committees made up of 2 areas per Committee, South East Committee (Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford) and South West Committee (Cork and Kerry). Each Committee then discusses the business of the area to include both Acute and PCCC Services. This would facilitate meetings in alternate venues e.g. Cork for two meetings, Kerry for the other two in the South West with Kilkenny for two meetings and Waterford for the other two in the South East

Option 2:-

Remain as is with 2 Committees, one PCCC and one Acute, alternating between Cork and Kilkenny venues; Acute Services meeting in the morning and PCCC in the afternoon. Members decide which Committee they wish to participate with and the relevant Managers attend updating Members on the relevant services across the HSE South.

Option 3:-

Have one Committee of all 39 members that meets 4 times per year alternating venues between Cork and Kilkenny.

The following questions were asked and were responded to:-

- Could consideration be given to dates of Council Meeting when arranging Forum Meetings to ensure that there is no conflict?
- Will a decision on these options for the Committee Meetings have an impact on the Forum Meetings?
- Could Regional Health Forum Meetings be held in the evening?

An adjournment of ten minutes took place to facilitate discussion between Members and Parties on the options for decision. The meeting reconvened and each Member in turn identified their preferred option. Option 1 was carried by all present. This option allows for geographical breakdown of membership – one Committee with representatives from Cork and Kerry and the other Committee to be made up from Members in Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford and

Wexford. Meetings will be scheduled simultaneously on 4 dates throughout the year and the relevant Acute and PCCC Managers for the areas will attend to discuss the local issues.

On behalf of the Members of the Regional Health Forum South and the HSE Management, the Chairperson extended a vote of sympathy to Cllr. Seanie Power on the death of his Father.

The Chairperson advised that the Meeting would proceed with the Notices of Motion and Questions. He explained that each Member could submit one Notice of Motion per meetings and that it would not be open to any Member to propose a similar Motion within a six month period. In terms of Questions each Member can put down one Question per Meeting and that one supplementary Question may be asked by the Questioner but that there is no debate on Questions.

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

**“That the new A & E Department be provided with a minimum of ten additional staff and two A & E Consultants to enable a full service be provided in the new Department.”**

A written response from Ms. Lily Byrnes, General Manager, Wexford General Hospital was circulated and referred to.

Cllr Browne welcomed the opening of the new Accident & Emergency Department at Wexford General Hospitals. He said that the Paediatric Department and part of the A & E Department remained closed and he called for these to be opened as soon as possible. Cllr. Browne said that there was a staff shortfall and that this staff shortage should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Mr. Gerry O’Dwyer, Interim Group CEO, confirmed that there was a working group in place to address these issues. He also confirmed that there was a recruitment process in train for paediatric nurses, midwives and general nurses.

Cllr. Browne queried whether there would be additional Consultant posts allocated to the A & E Department in Wexford General Hospital. Mr. O’Dwyer advised that discussions with the Clinical Programmes were ongoing and that he would update Members on progress at the next Committee Meeting.

4(b) Cllr. Joe Sullivan moved the following Notice of Motion standing in his name

**“That the HSE will now take every step necessary to guarantee executive commitment to reducing the risk to patients of acquiring healthcare-associated infections in all hospitals, to facilitate and support staff in the necessary training and to report back to this Forum at the next meeting on what steps have been taken to ensure that the concerns raised in the HIQA Report in relation to Wexford General Hospital have been addressed.”**

A written response from Ms. Lily Byrne, General Manager, Wexford General Hospital was circulated and referred to.

Cllr. Sullivan informed Members that he submitted this Motion as a result of a recent HIQA inspection and subsequent report wherein hygiene issues were cited

and HIQA concluded that there was a risk to patients of acquiring healthcare associated infections.

Mr. Gerry O'Dwyer referred to the comprehensive action plan that was adopted by the Executive Management Board of the Hospital on foot of the HIQA Inspection. Mr. O'Dwyer assured Cllr. Sullivan that the HSE were committed to implementing all of the HIQA Recommendations in relation to their inspection of Wexford General Hospital and indeed all Recommendations made by HIQA in relation to other inspections undertaken. He confirmed that hygiene is at the top of the HSE's agenda.

4(c) Cllr. Damian Quigg moved the following Notice of Motion standing in his name:

**"To call on the HSE to ensure that services in St Francis Special School in Beaufort, Co Kerry, be restored in full and to give a commitment to the parents that they will work to improve the quality of service delivery in relation to speech and language therapy services and physiotherapy services and the other services that are required on a daily basis to give these children and there parents a better quality of life."**

A written response from Mr. Ger Reaney, ISA Manager Cork and Kerry, was circulated and referred to.

Cllr. Quigg confirmed that he read through the Response received but disagreed with some of its contents. He said that it was vital that the therapies should be reinstated as soon as possible and that the lack of these services is having a detrimental affect on the children in need of them. Cllr. Quigg was supported in his Motion by a number of other Councillors.

Mr. Ger Reaney said that he fully understood the concerns of Cllr. Quigg and his fellow Councillors. He confirmed that he had met the families concerned and local management in Kerry had met the parents on a number of occasions and were working to address their concerns.

Mr. Reaney set out the background to the reconfiguration of services for children with disabilities, for children requiring early intervention services and for those attending School within the Kerry Region. He acknowledged that this resulted in significant change for all concerned and that this change was compounded by the temporary reduction in staffing levels. Mr. Reaney accepted that the vacancies within St. Francis Special School should have been addressed more quickly. He referred to the response issued wherein information was provided on the filling on the various posts and also said that he was happy to confirm that the Speech & Language Therapist was in situ since last week.

Mr. Reaney advised that a Review Group was established between parents, the school principal, KIDS and the HSE to ensure that the deficits are being addressed and that the children and their families have the service they require based on their identified needs. He said that this group will continue with its work until these issues have been fully resolved.

Cllr. Quigg said that he hoped that services/therapies would not be reduced by the HSE in this manner again.

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

**Can the HSE explain why, when patients are seen by the Orthopaedic Department in the South Infirmary Victoria Hospital and recommended to be fitted with Orthotic support, that the Orthopaedic Surgeon then has to fill out a general 7 page request form that is common to all practitioners. This is leading to delay in patients receiving vital orthopaedic treatment and is wasteful and leading to unnecessary duplication of services when the patient has already seen the specialist service and being recommended for treatment.**

A written response from Mr. Ger Reaney, ISA Manager Cork and Kerry was circulated and referred to.

Cllr. Sheehan advised that he had set down this Motion on foot on concerns raised by Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeons in the South Infirmary Victoria Hospital in relation to delays that ensued for patients for whom they had recommended orthotics. He said that the Consultants are Specialist in this area and that the standard form that they are presently required to complete on behalf of their patients is cumbersome and causing unnecessary delays.

Mr. Ger Reaney advised that a standardised approach to the application and referral process for Orthotics and Prosthetics was developed in 2013 by the HSE South Orthotics and Prosthetics Group whose membership included two Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeons. Applications from every source for orthotics are now submitted to a Resource Allocation Group whose role is to review the requests and ensure that those with the greatest clinical need are prioritised within the available budget. Mr. Reaney advised that a copy of the form itself was included with the Response and that the data required to complete the form was basic. He confirmed that he was happy to speak to the Consultants in question.

The Chairperson advised that Notice of Motion 4(e) and Question 5(d) would be taken together as they related to the same subject matter.

4(e) Cllr. Tom Wood moved the following Notice of Motion standing in his name

**"That this Forum calls on the Minister for Health and the HSE to formulate a serious plan for the beneficial use of our Lady's Hospital, Cashel as a major part of this purposely built 1940's hospital lies in darkness now for close on 16 years."**

5(d) Cllr. Tom Wood put forward the following Question

**"What's in store for Saint Patricks Hospital, Cashel, if the accredited and acclaimed Rehabilitation Unit, the heart of the caring establishment, is transferred.**

Ms. Anna Marie Lanigan's written Responses to the Notice of Motion and Question were circulated and referred to.

Cllr. Wood thanked Ms. Lanigan for her Responses. He informed Members that there was a detailed plan agreed for the Cashel hospitals in 1996 and a commitment to St. Patrick's Hospital retaining its services was an integral part of that agreement. He said that it was his view that the transferring of services from St. Patrick's Hospital to Our Lady's Hospital signalled the beginning of the closure of St. Patrick's Hospital. He referred to the line in Ms. Lanigan's Response to Question 5 (d) wherein it states that a development plan would be prepared after the transfer of services to Our Lady's Hospital. Cllr. Wood said that he had

significant concerns around this as he felt that there should be a plan in place now and he called on the HSE to put a plan in place as soon as possible.

Ms. Lanigan confirmed that the HSE was committed to developing sustainable high quality services for older people in Cashel. She advised that plans were underway to transfer the Rehabilitation Unit and high dependency clients from St. Patrick's Hospital to Our Lady's Hospital Cashel. This transfer is being undertaken to allow for refurbishment work to be undertaken in St. Patrick's Hospital in order to address the environmental issues identified in the HIQA report into the Hospital. She informed Members that HIQA had visited Our Lady's Hospital and that they have acknowledged the high standards in place there. Ms. Lanigan advised that, in the longer term, it is planned that a Community Nursing Unit, which will provide long stay residential care, will be developed in St. Patrick's Hospital Cashel. Ms. Lanigan assured the Members that there are no plans to reduce the services being provided and that the staffing challenges within St. Patrick's Hospital were being addressed.

In terms of Our Lady's Hospital, she confirmed that the ground floor of Our Lady's Hospital will continue to provide Primary Care and secondary Disability Out-Patient Services. In addition, the Le Cairde Unit on the grounds of the hospital will be modified and refurbished with the aim of establishing a 12 bedded Dementia Specific Unit.

## 5. Questions

5(a) Cllr. James Browne put forward the following Question:

**"There is an urgent need to clarify the costs incurred by medical card patients for blood tests as many GP's are now charging patients €10 to take blood tests for ongoing treatment even though the Department of Health insists the cost of these blood tests are covered under the GP services, as paid by the HSE. Please clarify whether or not, under the current medical card scheme, GP's are allowed to charge patients for carrying out of blood tests."**

A written Response by Ms. Anna Marie Lanigan, Area Manager, South East Primary Community and Continuing Care Services, was circulated and referred to.

Cllr. Browne thanked Ms. Lanigan for her comprehensive Response. He said that some GP's are charging medical card holders for sending blood samples to Laboratories.

Ms. Lanigan advised that she had liaised with the PCRS who confirmed to her that no costs should be incurred by medical card holder for tests relating to the investigation and treatment of their symptoms. She further advised that any medical card holder who has been charged in the circumstances as set out should make a complaint to their local Primary Care Unit.

On a point of Information Cllr. John Sheehan informed Members that there is no provision under the GMS Contract for chronic disease management and that GP's can charge medical card holders for treatment under this heading.

5(b) Cllr. Joe Sullivan put forward the following Question:

**"To provide a breakdown of how many ambulances, rapid response vehicles and other emergency vehicles are based in Wexford, how many**

**hours each type of vehicle is in use and whether there is any intention to increase the amount of vehicles and hours and if so when.”**

A written Response by Mr. Michael Norris, Operations Performance Manager, National Ambulance Service HSE South, was circulated and referred to.

Cllr. Joe Sullivan advised that it was his understanding that two ambulances cover the New Ross, Enniscorthy and Gorey areas at night time. He informed Members that the population in these areas experience a significant surge during the summer months. He asked if the NAS had any plans to increase this number to three for the duration of the summer.

Mr. Michael Norris advised that the National Ambulance Service was at an advanced stage of reaching agreement with staff in relation to the realignment of service levels in County Wexford. He said that part of this process provided for the provision of a fourth emergency vehicle in County Wexford on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. He said that he hoped agreement would be reached by year end 2014 and that this agreement would ensure that the three areas identified would have access to 24 hour emergency ambulance cover.

5(c) Cllr. Damian Quigg put forward the following Question

**“What are the intentions of the HSE regarding mental health services in South and West Kerry following the closure of local community based mental health facilities (e.g. Island View, Cahirciveen given that County Kerry has now the second highest suicide rate in Ireland, standing at 15.5 deaths per 100,000 population (National average 11.7) up from 11.5 deaths per 100,000 from 2004. Does the HSE believe that this closure was a positive step considering these statistics?”**

A written Response by Mr. Ger Reaney, ISA Manager, Cork & Kerry was circulated and referred to.

Cllr. Quigg asked what plans the Mental Health Services in Kerry had to tackle suicide. He said that he had submitted the Question because Kerry had the second highest rate of suicide in the Country. Cllr. Quigg told the Members that it was critical that an education programme on this subject should be delivered with the school system.

Mr. Ger Reaney told Members that suicide prevention is an area of concern to all working in the HSE, including the staff of the Mental Health Services in Kerry. He confirmed that considerable work has been done in this area and he also acknowledged that more needs to be done. He advised that his Response to Cllr. Quigg’s Question sets out in detail the approach being adopted to tackle suicide by the Kerry Mental Health Services. The information provided in the Response includes details of services provided by the Mental Health Resource Officer, Console and the Jigsaw Programme.

Mr. Reaney told Members that the Kerry Suicide Response Forum was set up in response to the high incidence of suicide in Kerry. The Forum was established by the HSE and brings together a range of statutory, community and voluntary agencies in Kerry. These organisations are working with the HSE to offer immediate co-ordinated support and practical help to people and families affected by suicide through the provision of helplines and specific training programmes.

The Members were advised that Kerry Mental Health Services was moving away from an institutional medical model to a more community based, person centred



approach to delivering its services. Mr. Reaney said that this was in line with "A Vision for Change" and is the stated preference of service users, their families and staff. As part of this re-orientation of the service a review was undertaken in Island View Support Hostel to determine if the residents' needs were being best met in independent living accommodation or in a long term older persons setting. Mr. Reaney said that options were discussed with the residents and their families and the decisions made on appropriate alternative accommodation were based on the individual's needs and welfare.

Mr. Reaney explained that the staff of Island View Support Hostel were redeployed to work with the Home Treatment Teams who work in partnership with the service users and their families to facilitate recovery in settings which are primarily community based and available seven days a week.

**6. Date and Time of next meeting – Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> of September at 2pm, Council Chambers, County Hall, Cork**