

REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM

**Chairperson,
Cllr. Jim Townsend**

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MINUTES - MEETING OF REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM SOUTH

Thursday 16th May, 2013 @ 2.00pm
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNTY HALL, CORK

Present:

Cllr. Liam Ahearn	Cllr. Sean Lonergan
Cllr. Pat Burton	Cllr. Tom Maher
Cllr. John Carey	Cllr. Barbara Murray
Cllr. Timmy Collins	Cllr. Dr. Sean McCarthy
Cllr. John Coonan	Cllr. Arthur McDonald
Cllr. Brendan Cronin	Cllr. Michael O'Brien
Cllr. Tom Cronin	Cllr. Bobby O'Connell
Cllr. Dr. Patrick Crowley	Cllr. Frank O'Flynn
Cllr. John Joe Culloty	Cllr. Laurence (Cha) O'Neill
Cllr. Tony Dempsey	Cllr. John O'Sullivan
Cllr. Declan Doocey	Cllr. Hilary Quinlan
Cllr. Wayne Fennell	Cllr. Seamus Ryan
Cllr. Matt Griffin	Cllr. Mary Shields
Cllr. Mary Hanna Hourigan	Cllr. Jerry Sullivan
Cllr. Denis Kennedy	Cllr. Jim Townsend - Chairperson
Cllr. Michael Kinsella	Cllr. Ted Tynan
Cllr. Tim Lombard	

Apologies: Cllr. Pat Cody

In Attendance:

- Mr. Pat Healy, Regional Director of Operations - South
- Mr. Richie Dooley, Area Manager, HSE Waterford/Wexford
- Mr. Ger Reaney, Area Manager, HSE Cork
- Mr. Michael Fitzgerald, Area Manager, HSE Kerry
- Ms. Anna-Marie Lanigan, Area Manager, HSE Carlow/Kilkenny and South Tipperary
- Ms. Deirdre Scully, Area Manager, Community Services, Cork
- Mr. PJ Hathaway A/Assistant National Director HR, HSE South
- Ms. Angie O'Brien, Area Communications Manager, HSE South
- Ms. Sinéad Byrne, Manager, Regional Health Forum, South
- Mr. Robert Morton, Director, National Ambulance Service
- Dr. Cathal O'Donnell, Medical Director, National Ambulance Service
- Mr. Nicky Glynn, Area Operations Manager, National Ambulance Service, HSE South
- Regional Health Forum Office staff

1. Adoption of the Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 11th April 2013

At the proposal of Cllr. Seanie Lonergan seconded by Cllr. John Coonan, the Minutes of the Forum meeting held on Thursday 11th April 2013 were approved and adopted by members.

2. Chairperson's Correspondence

Cllr. Jim Townsend, Chairperson welcomed Members and Managers to the meeting. He also welcomed Mr. Robert Morton, Director, National Ambulance Service, Dr. Cathal O'Donnell, Medical Director, National Ambulance and Mr. Nicky Glynn, Area Operations Manager, National Ambulance Service, HSE South who were present to discuss an Emergency Motion submitted by Cllr. John O'Sullivan. He also referred to Cllr. Brendan Cronin's Notice of Motion on the Kerry Ambulance Service. Cllr. Townsend explained that following discussion with the Vice-Chairman and Party Whips and in consultation with the Regional Director of Operations a decision was taken to discuss this item next on the Agenda:-

Cllr. Townsend outlined the Emergency Motion submitted by Cllr. John O'Sullivan as follows:-

"Is it the intention of or is it possible to get an urgent statement from the Ambulance Service and a debate regarding the public disquiet at the perceived lack of response of the Ambulance service in Midleton last week."

Cllr. O'Sullivan thanked the Chairperson and the Executive for allowing discussion of this Motion and expressed his appreciation to the National Ambulance Service (NAS) for their attendance at the meeting. He explained that the tragic incident resulting in the death of a 2 year old boy which occurred in Midleton had also been raised at a Council Meeting on the previous Monday and there was considerable public concern in the manner in which this case had been handled. Cllr. O'Sullivan while appreciating that an outcome into the enquiry is awaited asked the NAS to comment on the events surrounding this tragic accident.

Mr. Robert Morton, Director, National Ambulance Service expressed sympathies to the family of Vakaris Martinaitis on the tragic loss of their son. He explained that a formal Incident Review has been commissioned into the manner in which the 999 call received from Midleton on the 6th May was managed. He outlined that a preliminary examination of the facts surrounding this incident has confirmed that an emergency ambulance was immediately available to respond to the call. A formal review has been established in order to fully establish all the facts surrounding the management of this emergency call including why the ambulance was subsequently not made available.

Mr. Morton explained that on 6th May at 2pm a 999 call was received and lasted 3 minutes. At 2.02pm an emergency ambulance travelling from Cork University Hospital to its area of operations in East Cork was asked to attend the scene, however at 2.04pm the emergency ambulance was stood down based on the information provided to the Ambulance Control Centre. Mr. Morton confirmed that media reports suggesting no emergency ambulance was available were untrue and stated he wished to answer all questions fully but was constrained in doing so as the Review is in progress. He informed members that the Review Team includes experts in Pre-Hospital Emergency Care and Primary Care, two from Ireland, one from Northern Ireland and one from the UK. The Terms of Reference have been compiled and it is expected that the review will take 6-8 weeks to conclude. The Review has been commissioned by Dr. Cathal O'Donnell, Medical Director, National Ambulance Service and the first meeting has already taken place. Mr. Morton confirmed that he understands that the outcome of this review will be made public.

Cllr. O'Sullivan thanked Mr. Morton for his report and appreciated the 6-8 week timeline involved for the investigation. He outlined his disappointment that no public representative was on the Review Committee set up to investigate this case, given the public disquiet into the incident and subsequent representations made to public representatives for the area following this incident.

Cllr. O'Sullivan was adamant that people must be reassured and an explanation given and also suggested that recordings of the 999 call received on the day in question should be released. He stated that the public need to have confidence going forward that appropriate services are available to respond to emergency calls and confidence needs to be instilled that these calls are responded to as a matter of urgency as unfortunately in this case a child had died.

Mr. Morton explained that following this review he understands that the outcome will be made public. With regard to public representation on the Group he explained that there was an ethical issue surrounding this.

Following the Report from Mr. Robert Morton, other members expressed their concerns, raised issues in relation to this incident and outlined their views with regard to modernisation of the National Ambulance Service. These were discussed in detail and responded to by NAS.

Regarding members concerns on the modernisation of the National Ambulance Service he reiterated that the use of on call as a mechanism for the delivery of ambulance services has been the subject of significant focus and the elimination of on-call is the key element of broader range of changes which have taken place in East Cork, North Cork and West Cork. He also reassured members that reports of a reduction in emergency cover in the East Cork area are incorrect and that reorganisation of the National Ambulance Service in this region has seen an approximate increase of 11% in rostered man hours in the area over the last 12 months.

The Chairperson and members thanked NAS for attending the meeting and await the outcome of the Review Team.

The Establishment of Hospital Groups as a transition to Independent Hospital Trusts – report launched by Minister for Health on 14th May 2013

Cllr. Townsend referred members to documentation circulated with regard to the establishment of the Hospital Groups and the Smaller Hospitals Framework and explained that following discussion with himself, the Party Whips and the Regional Director of Operations it was agreed that these documents would not be discussed in detail at today's meeting but that Mr. Pat Healy, Regional Director of Operations would briefly take members through them and they would be discussed in more detail at the next meeting.

Mr. Healy outlined the following documents:

- ***The Establishment of Hospital Groups as a transition to Independent Hospital Trusts*** which was a Report produced for the Minister by a panel of national and international experts led by Professor John Higgins.
- ***Frequently Asked Questions*** document based on the findings in this Report.
- ***Securing the Future of Smaller Hospitals: A Framework for Development*** which outlines the need for smaller hospitals and larger hospitals to operate together and linked to the formation of sustainable hospitals groups.
- ***Presentation*** from Professor John Higgins on the Establishment of Hospital Groups as a Transition to Independent Hospital Trusts and a ***Press Release*** from the Department of Health and Children.

Mr. Healy explained that on Tuesday 14th May 2013 the Minister for Health announced a reorganisation of public hospitals into more efficient and accountable hospitals groups which were informed by the two Reports outlined above. These reports are based on the commitments outlined in the publication of a *Future Health* by the Minister in November last which explained the strategic framework for the reform of the health service 2012 – 2015.

Mr. Healy informed members that six hospital groups will be established to include Dublin North East, Dublin Midlands, Dublin East, South/South West, West/North West and the Midwest. He outlined that St. Luke's Hospital, Kilkenny and Wexford General Hospital will come under the Dublin East Group and Kilcreene Orthopaedic Hospital will be linked to Waterford Regional Hospital

(WRH) within the new South/South West Group. In the responding to the debate which followed, Mr. Healy outlined some of the specifics incorporated in the report with regard to the future role of hospitals within the region. A number of members have raised a number of concerns in relation to WRH and in this regard, Mr. Healy advised that the report confirmed a number of key roles for WRH as follows:

Hospital reconfiguration is at an advanced stage in the south western part of this group, and the implementation of the *Reconfiguration of Acute Hospital Services, Cork & Kerry Region; a Roadmap to develop an integrated university hospital network* (2010) will continue under the group structure. However, there is an absence of a consensus/shared vision amongst all the hospitals in the current southeast hospital network.

WRH will continue to be to an NCCP centre, retaining its current population referral base for cancer patients. Joint consultation appointments, such as general surgery shared with Wexford, across the groups will continue to support the specialist cancer services it provides.

WRH will continue to be the hub for the South East and renal services which include a centre of haemodialysis, renal home therapies (peritoneal dialysis/home haemodialysis) and renal transplant follow up.

WRH will continue to be a regional trauma centre, including ED, Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) and Ophthalmology. To ensure WRH continues to provide the full range of elective and trauma orthopaedics services, Lourdes Orthopaedic Hospital, Kilcreene will be managed from WRH within the new South/South West group structure. (It is currently managed by St. Luke's Hospital Carlow/Kilkenny).

WRH will continue to provide invasive cardiology services for the South East population. Working in collaboration with the cardiology service in Cork the current service in Cork the current service should be extended with new joint appointment of cardiologists.

In response to queries raised re Kerry General Hospital (KGH) and Wexford General Hospital (WGH), Mr. Healy advised that KGH because of its geographic location, similar to Letterkenny and WGH Hospitals, should retain its full range of ED, medical, surgical, maternity and paediatric services.

In relation to the Smaller Hospitals Framework Document and from the point of view of the South which includes Mallow and Bantry General Hospital, there is nothing new to report as the process of reorganisation of services provided in these two hospitals is well underway. Mr. Healy explained that the focus is now on next steps and the implementation process. The Minister has thanked Professor John Higgins who has agreed to stay on until the end of June to work on the initial implementation phase in relation to the establishment of the Hospital Groups. Work will commence immediately and will be overseen by a National Strategic Advisory Group driven by the HSE. Group Chairpersons and CEOs will be appointed as soon as possible and preliminary governance arrangements will be put in place.

Members thanked Mr. Healy for this update and agreed that it would be more appropriate to go through the information and discuss in detail at the next meeting. Suggestions were made that Professor John Higgins or the Minister would be available to answer members' queries/concerns in relation to the Hospital Groups. Members also stated that local briefings would be of great benefit to discuss these documents further. A number of members had queries in relation to St. Luke's Hospital and Waterford Regional Hospital. Mr. Healy referred members to page 84/85 and Page 86/87 of the main document which outlines detailed commentaries and important specifics setting out significant roles for the hospitals involved. He also stated the importance of reading the Frequently Asked Questions document.

Mr. Healy agreed that this important item would be discussed in detail at the next Regional Health Forum meeting on the 20th June and he undertook to invite a member of the National Strategic Advisory Group to attend the meeting to answer Members questions.

3. Committees

Cllr. Townsend informed members that the next Committee Meetings will be held on Thursday 11th July 2013 in Cork in the Performance and Development Unit which has now moved to the administration building, St. Mary's Health Campus, Bakers Road, Cork.

4. Notice of Motions

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

"That the HSE South and the National Ambulance Service give a commitment to meet and engage with all local groups and public representatives in South Kerry to discuss and hear the serious public concerns on proposed changes to ambulance cover for Killarney, Kenmare and Cahersiveen prior to any reduction to the current ambulance service being implemented".

A joint written response was circulated to members from Mr. Nicky Glynn, Area Operations Manager South, National Ambulance Service and Mr. Michael Fitzgerald, Area Manager, HSE Kerry which outlined the successful completion of a number of phases across County Cork with the elimination of on-call arrangements in the National Ambulance Service. As a result planning for Phase 4 (South Kerry) can now be progressed. This will include stations in Cahersiveen, Killarney and Kenmare with North Kerry to be examined at a later stage in Phase 5. Members were informed that as in each Phase to date any decisions to be made will have been preceded by detailed consultation with particular consideration being given to peninsular areas. The HSE will not be in a position to prepare a final model for South Kerry until a number of deliberations have been completed to include outcome of public consultations, consultations with General Practitioners, learning from efficiency changes in parts of the National Ambulance Service, benefits of more effective work practices and industrial relations requirements.

Cllr. Brendan Cronin thanked the HSE for the response. He expressed his sympathies to the family in Midleton on the loss of their son. Cllr. Cronin complimented the staff and paramedics working in the National Ambulance Service in Kerry but outlined his concerns regarding the modernisation of the current service and the possible of a loss of an emergency ambulance in the Cahersiveen, Kenmare, Killarney area referring to current population base and additional tourist population. He also outlined concerns with regard to locations in rural areas. With regard to the finalization of deliberations based on 'outcome of public consultation' Cllr. Cronin sought clarification on whether these consultations had been advertised/taken place and if it was possible to make submissions and express concerns. He also referred to a previous response from Mr. Morton's office and reference to an ambulance vehicle being able to accommodate two people.

Mr. Nicky Glynn explained that there are no cutbacks planned for the National Ambulance Service in the South Kerry area but rather modernization of the current service to include elimination of on-call, centralization of the Control centre and introduction of Intermediate Care Vehicles which will enhance, modernize and build on the current service. With regard to public consultation Mr. Pat Healy, Regional Director of Operations outlined that initial talks started in February last but consultation processes for phases 1-3 for North Cork, East Cork and West Cork were completed first and further consultations will continue for Kerry. He explained that the HSE is committed to briefing Oireachtas Members, Public Representatives, GPs and Community Leaders prior to the implementation of any final model. He explained that no date has been set for a further briefing but members would be informed accordingly.

4(b) Cllr. John O'Sullivan moved the following Notice of Motion standing in his name:-

"In light of the reported effects of Fluoride on human health and the reports of the discontinuation of fluoridation of drinking water in many parts of the world, that an overview of the effects of fluoride on human health be provided to allow for a debate at forum level and if felt appropriate a forum opinion be expressed"

A written response was circulated to members from Ms. Mary Keane, Regional Chief Environmental Health Officer South. Related documents were also circulated to include the position statement from the Irish Expert Body on Fluorides and Health regarding water fluoridation in the Republic of Ireland. Mr. Pat Healy, Regional Director of Operations explained that the response had not changed since a similar Motion had been put down at a forum meeting in May of last year.

Cllr. John O'Sullivan outlined his rationale for putting down this Motion again and felt that as a public representative he had a responsibility to his constituents who had concerns regarding the fluoridation of water. He referred to a recent presentation given to Skibbereen Town Council of which he is also a member and felt that the information received pre-dates current issues which are arising. He also referred to the discontinuation of water fluoridation worldwide and a decrease in dental cavity rates since its discontinuation. A number of other members also outlined their concerns. Mr. Pat Healy taking on board comments expressed by members explained that the Expert Body would be willing to meet with members in committee and that an invitation would be extended to them asking that they make a presentation at the next Committee Meetings to be held in July.

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

"As the number of people suffering from Alzheimer's disease is set to increase, and as there is no adequate facility available for these people in Kerry, that the HSE South would look at making such a facility available on the grounds of St. Finan's Hospital, Killarney."

A written response was circulated to members from Mr. Michael Fitzgerald, Area Manager, HSE Kerry which outlined the current provision of appropriate longstay care for dementia patients in a specific unit within Killarney Community Hospital's complex. Mr. Fitzgerald explained that a significant number of people with dementia are also living at home with family and community support as well as receiving services from the HSE and other HSE funded and voluntary organisations. He informed members that the HSE is currently in the process of finalising plans to be submitted for planning for a purpose built 40 bed unit on the grounds of the old Cherryfield site in Killarney. Cllr. Culloty welcomed the building of a 40 bedded unit, thanked Mr. Fitzgerald for his response and sought clarification on the specific area designed to meet the needs of dementia/Alzheimer patients.

Mr. Fitzgerald referred to the review currently being undertaken by the HSE of existing residential care facilities to ensure their ongoing compliance with HIQA Residential Care Standards. He explained for some facilities this review may require new builds and for others an extension or refurbishment may be adequate. The review will also consider the requirements for older people with challenging behaviour as appropriate. Mr. Fitzgerald also outlined the approval of a specific Psychiatry of Old Age Team for Kerry which is part of the 2013 Government initiative for mental health services and will be the first such team in the county. This will compliment the existing team of Consultant Geriatricians at Kerry General Hospital who currently provide an extensive outreach service to primary care services and community hospitals.

5. Questions

5(a) Cllr. Brendan Cronin put forward the following Question:

“Please outline the full details of all payments made by the HSE to the SouthDoc service for the period from January 1st 2012 to December 31st 2012 including any rental charges for HSE owned properties used by SouthDoc”

A written response was circulated to members from Ms. Deirdre Scully, Area Manager, Community Services – Cork. Cllr. Brendan Cronin informed the meeting that he was satisfied with the response and that it could be taken as read.

5(b) Cllr. Wayne Fennell put forward the following Question:

“Are the HSE lands at Kelvin Grove still up for sale and if so has a purchaser been identified and what is the reserve on these lands?”

A joint written response was circulated to members from Ms. Anna-Marie Lanigan, Area Manager, Carlow/Kilkenny and South Tipperary and Mr. Pat McCarthy, Assistant National Director Estates HSE South. Ms. Lanigan confirmed that it is the intention of the HSE to sell the lands at the now vacant Kelvin Grove site. She explained that these lands had previously been put up for Public Auction in 2010 but at that time failed to meet the Reserve/Open Market Valuation as set by the HSE. She outlined that a new Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area Plan was adopted by Carlow County Council in 2012 and the zoning covering the Kelvin Grove site has been amended which allows for a wider range of development opportunities than the previous zoning.

Cllr. Fennell thanked Ms. Lanigan for the response and sought clarification on the condition of the building, whether or not an offer had been made when the land was put up for auction, the acreage involved and when the land is sold whether or not the money received will be ring fenced and put back into Carlow Mental Health Services? Ms. Lanigan explained that the land involves 5 acres and is not currently on the market as it is awaiting rezoning. She also outlined that the HSE has engaged a Conservation Architect to review the Kelvin Grove Building and based on his report the HSE is applying to have the protected status currently applying to the building removed. As a result it is expected that the HSE will have a more commercially attractive and saleable property. With regard to the money received following the sale of lands, Mr. Pat Healy, Regional Director of Operations outlined that all resources from the sale of mental health lands goes back into central reserve. He explained that the HSE South has benefitted significantly and has obtained considerable funding up front particularly with regard to St. Senan’s in Enniscorthy and St. Luke’s, Clonmel.

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

“Can the HSE South confirm that Bowel Cancer Surgery will continue to be carried out at Kerry General Hospital into the future?”

A written response was circulated to members from Mr. Michael Fitzgerald, Area Manager, HSE Kerry which outlined the policy in relation to the centralisation of major cancer services in Ireland into eight designated cancer centres. With regard to the Cork and Kerry areas the designated centre is Cork University Hospital. Mr. Fitzgerald explained that it has been the intention at all times that Kerry General Hospital will retain its full range of ED, medical, surgical, maternity and paediatric services because of its geographic location and confirmed that in regard to the reorganisation of Acute Hospital Services, there has been no change in plans for Kerry General Hospital in this regard.

With regard to surgical services, Mr. Fitzgerald explained that these services will continue to be provided in Kerry General Hospital in line with the Surgical Clinical Programme and the NCCP. He

outlined the current refurbishment taking place with regards to the provision of appropriate accommodation and equipment for endoscopy services as well as the pursuit with the National Cancer Screening Services for the provision of bowel cancer screening services for the area. KGH currently remains a candidate site for this screening service. With regard to the provision of rectal cancer surgery Mr. Fitzgerald informed members that in line with the NCCP policy that this surgery currently being provided in Kerry General Hospital will transfer to Cork University Hospital but no date has been set yet.

Cllr. Culloty thanked Mr. Fitzgerald for the response and felt it would be of benefit that Bowel Cancer Surgery be maintained in Kerry General Hospital but he understood the centralisation of major cancer services into the 8 designated Cancer Centres. He sought clarification on the candidate site/screening service. Mr. Fitzgerald explained that significant refurbishment work is currently being undertaken to establish a 2 room endoscopy suite as the current endoscopy unit comprises of only one room. This will be completed later in the year. Formal approval will be required and once the facility is in place it will then be possible to proceed with the cancer screening programme in Kerry General Hospital.

5(d) Cllr. Dr. Patrick Crowley put forward the following Question:

“In light of recent events in Maternity Services, is the HSE South satisfied that sufficient Risk Management Processes are in place across all Maternity Services and that there is a sharing of learning from experiences?”

A joint written response was circulated to members from Mr. Richie Dooley, Area Manager, HSE Waterford/Wexford and Ms. Deirdre O’Keeffe, Regional General Manager, Quality and Patient Safety which outlined the HSE’s commitment to the provision of a safe, high quality health service. Staff, line managers and senior personnel within the hospitals and at corporate levels are key to achieving standards with ongoing training throughout the HSE South. Mr. Dooley referred to the National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare which were launched in 2012 and outlined the work undertaken by the Quality and Patient Safety Directorate and listed the HSE priorities for 2013. He explained the sharing of best practice is promoted through the Regional Quality and Risk Managers Forum and outlined the work undertaken by the Area Quality and Patient Safety Committees. These committees are set up and compile bimonthly risk register reports which are forwarded to the Regional Quality and Patient Safety Committees for assurance, analysis, audit and shared learning.

Cllr. Dr. Crowley referred to two incidents in Maternity Units in Galway and Waterford and in particular referred to a recent interim settlement of €1.4m made to a young girl in Waterford for injuries sustained at birth. He referred to recent media coverage surrounding this case and allegations that 3 Consultant Obstetricians were on leave at this time with one locum Consultant in charge. Mr. Richie Dooley explained that this was incorrect; he confirmed that the 3 Consultant Obstetricians were not on leave. This statement had been retracted and the correct information had been subsequently published.

With regard to Maternity Units, he confirmed that there are extensive risk management processes in place to meet national requirements and that the hospitals concerned have an internal Obstetric and Neo-natal Governance Group, a Maternity Governance Board and each publishes an Annual Report. He also stated that Risk Managers are in place in each Acute Hospital. These Managers are part of a Risk Managers Forum and compile reports with leadership and learning being paramount. He explained that all risks are reported, reviewed and monitored or escalated as appropriate. There is a system in place for reporting and tracking all cases and learning is shared in a structured manner across HSE South.

Cllr. Dr. Crowley accepted the information provided but felt that there was a lack of accountability in both of these cases. Mr. Dooley stated that Medical Professionals are accountable to their Medical Professional bodies and Medical Council and detailed risk management processes which are in place could be discussed in more detail at Committee level if required.

6. Date and Time of next Meeting

The next meeting of the Regional Health Forum, South will be held on **Thursday 20th June 2013** at **2pm, Council Chambers, County Hall, Cork**. Members were informed that this meeting is the Forum's Annual General Meeting where there will be election of a new Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. Members were requested that nominations are discussed with the Party Whips in advance of the meeting.