

**Minutes of Regional Health Forum West meeting, held on Tuesday,
24th April 2012 at 2.00pm in Room 1, Education Centre,
HSE Offices, Merlin Park, Galway**

Miontuairiscí cruinnithe an Fhórait Réigiúnach Sláinte, ar an Mháirt, 24 Aibreán 2012, ag 2.00 .i.n, sa tIonad
Oideachais, Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte, Páirc Mheirlinne, Gaillimh.

Chairperson

Cllr Pádraig Conneely

Members Present

Cllr Liam Blaney	Cllr Mary Hoade	Cllr Austin Francis O'Malley
Cllr Rose Brennan	Cllr Michael Hourigan	Cllr Annie May Reape
Cllr Tim Broderick	Cllr Gordon Hughes	Cllr Damien Riedy
Cllr Ciaran Brogan	Cllr John Kennedy	Cllr Gerry Reynolds
Cllr Pat Burke	Cllr Frank McBrearty Jr.	Cllr Kevin Sheahan
Cllr Richard Butler	Cllr John 'Rocky' McGrath	Cllr Tony Ward
Cllr John Carroll	Cllr Michael McBride	Cllr Seamus Weir
Cllr Catherine Connolly	Cllr Aoiffe McLoughlin	
Cllr Tom Connolly	Cllr Gerry McLoughlin	
Cllr Shaun Cunniffe	Cllr Paula McNamara	
Cllr Ger Fahy	Cllr Tom McNamara	
Cllr Laurence Fallon	Cllr Tony Mulqueen	
Cllr Michael Finnerty	Cllr Gerry Murray	

Apologies

Ms. Ann Doherty, CEO MidWest Region Hospitals Group
Cllr Sean McGowan

Absent

Cllr Michael Crowe
Cllr Bernard McGuinness
Cllr Sean MacManus
Cllr Brian Meaney

In Attendance

John Hennessy, Regional Director of Operations
Tony Canavan, Chief Operations Officer, GUH
Siobhan O'Sullivan, Acute Services Lead and Westdoc Manager
Paudie O'Riordan, Area Operations Manager West, National Ambulance Service
Chris Rudland, General Manager, Consumer Affairs Area Office
Diarmuid O'Donovan, Director of Public Health
Liam Minihan, Asst National Director of Finance
Catherine Cunningham, Area Manager Galway/Roscommon PCCC Services
Siobhan Patten, Area Performance & Development Manager
Bill Maher, CEO, Galway Roscommon Hospitals Group
Marian Cavanagh, Clerical Officer, Consumer Affairs Area Office
Erin Kelly, Staff Officer, Consumer Affairs Area Office

365/38/12 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 28th February 2012 were proposed by Cllr John Carroll, seconded by Cllr Tomas Mannion and adopted.

366/38/12 Matters Arising

Breast Cancer Services Sligo

Cllr Aoiffe McLoughlin enquired as to what stage of the recruitment process the HSE was currently at with regard to the filling of the two Radiography posts to cover mammography services in Sligo

John Hennessy advised that sourcing suitably qualified candidates for the posts is proving difficult and confirmed that once the posts are filled the service will resume.

Action: John Hennessy will update with respect to whether the interviews have already take place.

Blue Line Smoking Ban

Cllr Catherine Connolly & Cllr Pádraig Conneely both felt that the Blue Line Smoking ban was not working and should be more flexible where elderly patients are concerned. Cllr Connolly highlighted the fact that Merlin Park is a large site for patients to have to walk to the gate and asked that a realistic approach be adopted.

Tony Canavan agreed that there needs to be a flexible approach but suggests that it is also important to remember that tobacco is an addiction. He confirmed that patients are assessed on an individual basis by their consultant and a decision is then made based on the individual's needs and health.

Budget Reductions for voluntary Agencies

Cllr Tom McNamara requested that there be no further budget reductions applied to voluntary agencies.

John Hennessy outlined that in 2012 a 3.5% budget reduction was applied and a total exemption from budget reductions was not possible in the current climate.

Transport Issues

Cllr Annie May Reape queried the new transport arrangements available to patients and suggested that she was aware of patients who had been refused transport.

John Hennessy confirmed that there is a new transport plan in place which operates on a more targeted approach. The old system approved automatic transport for specific categories of patients; however the new system, works on the basis of need and is a more target approach.

Action: Cllr Annie May Reape will discuss further with Paudie O'Riordan directly.

Hospital Discharges

Cllr Catherine Connolly asked how many patients are sitting in beds in GUH that should be discharged to nursing homes?

Bill Maher informed the members that there is now a weekly report produced and submitted nationally on performance in this area and there is a zero tolerance approach now adopted.

Rheumatology Services

Cllr Liam Blaney noted that questions in relation to Rheumatology were omitted from the previous minutes and asked that this be rectified.

Action: Minutes to be checked and amended if necessary.

367/38/12 Chairman's Business

Apologies

The Chairman acknowledged apologies from Cllr Sean McGowan and Ms Ann Doherty.

Welcome

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Damien Riedy, who replaces Cllr Jerome Scanlan, to the Forum.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Bill Maher, New CEO, Galway Roscommon Hospitals Group, who commenced his new role in January 2012.

Meeting with Minister Reilly

The Chairman advised that the meeting of the 4 Forum Chairpersons with the Minister will take place on Monday 30th April 2012. He invited members to submit any issues or observations that they wish discussed at this meeting to the Regional Health Forum Office before next Thursday, 26th April 2012.

Cllr Kevin Sheahan asked when members would have the opportunity to discuss the outcome of the meeting with Minister Reilly.

The Chairman confirmed that it would be discussed at the Committee Meeting on 15th May and in the interim a report would be compiled and emailed to all members.

Action: Regional Health Forum Office to compile a report of the meeting and issue to members via email.

RHF Questions

The Chairman advised members that the manner in which questions to the RHF are posed needs to be examined. He reminded members that each Councillor is allowed to submit up to four questions. However, at present some questions being submitted can contain four questions in one, thus allowing a single Councillor to submit up to sixteen questions. The Chairman reminded members of the importance of adhering to the guidelines in this regard.

Structure of the RHF

The Chairman noted that the current structure of the RHF is now in place for two years and will discuss this with management in due course.

368/38/12 Questions

Questions and Responses Document is available on:

[http://www.hse.ie/eng/About/Who/Regional Health Forum West](http://www.hse.ie/eng/About/Who/Regional_Health_Forum_West)

Follow Ups from Supplementary Questions include:

W38Q901 – Cllr J. Kennedy – Community Hospital of the Assumption in Thurles

Cllr Kennedy requested that Bernard Gloster keep him updated via email.

Action: John Hennessy to brief Cllr Kennedy via telephone call on Wednesday 25th April 2012.

W38Q910 – Cllr Pdraig Conneely – Total number of patients waiting for Outpatient Appointments for UHG/Merlin Park.

Bill Maher suggested that the length of time a patient is waiting is the issue rather than the size of the waiting list itself. One of the key challenges is validating the waiting lists and this is currently in progress and excellent head way had been achieved to date. Mr. Maher confirmed that the SDU has not yet implemented a waiting time target but will do so in due course.

Action: Tony Canavan/Bill Maher to keep Forum members updated with the current numbers on waiting lists.

W38Q912 – Cllr Pdraig Conneely - Absenteeism Task Force Absenteeism figures for UHG/Merlin Park.

John Hennessy spoke about the new Task Force with remit to manage and reduce the absenteeism in the HSE West by implementing multi-disciplinary, cross-functional, 'per site' interventions with a targeted approach.

Cllr Damien Riedy asked if a breakdown of the absenteeism figures could be given by staff category.

Action: Francis Rogers will provide these figures

W38Q914 – Cllr Tony Ward – Medical Card or GP Card System

Cllr Ward expressed his dissatisfaction with the medical Care centralisation programme and feels it is causing complications and delays.

Action: Cllr Tony Ward to submit his issues by way of a motion, to be sent to the Minister.

W38Q917 – Cllr T. Mannion – Westdoc answering service

Cllr Mannion questioned if a telephone support can be provided for those hard of hearing and questioned if this could be funded by the HSE.

Action: Siobhan O'Sullivan outlined that she is currently seeking information on 'DeafEar' and will examine if this may be an appropriate option.

Action: John Hennessy outlined that there is currently a review of the GP contract underway and this will be discussed further when it has been finalized.

W38Q920 – Cllr L. Fallon – Ambulance response times

Cllr Fallon stated that the question with respect to response times was not answered.

Paudie O'Riordan responded by informing the members that HIQA have commenced recording response times. However, this poses a significant challenge in the West and the eight minute response time is a major challenge. Mr. O'Riordan highlighted the fact that response time is not always the most important factor and rather patient outcome is equally important.

Cllr Gerry McLoughlin enquired to the possibility of getting a document or presentation outlining the changes happening in the Ambulance Service.

Action: Paudie O’Riordan will make a presentation on Ambulance/Transport Services, at the next Regional Health Forum.

W38Q925 – Cllr C. Connolly – Private nursing homes in Galway City and County under the Fair Deal System

Action: Catherine Cunningham, Area Manager Galway/Roscommon PCCC will circulate document in relation to Nursing Homes.

W38Q926 – Cllr C. Connolly – Galway City and County – Long term illness scheme

Information given in the answer was inaccurate.

Action: Catherine Cunningham will revert to Cllr Connolly with clarification.

W38Q927 – Cllr J. Carroll – Upgrading Works to Existing Surgical Theatre at Nenagh Hospital?

John Hennessy confirmed a start day of May 2012.

Action: Ann Doherty will revert to Cllr Carroll with clarification in relation to Phase 2 of the project.

W38Q928 – Cllr J. Carroll – Commencement Works on New Surgical Theatre at Nenagh Hospital

Cllr Carroll suggested that the HSE should produce a schedule of services.

Action: John Hennessy agreed that this was a good suggestion and consideration would be given to it.

369/38/12 Motions

W38M246 That I call on the HSE to indicate what proposals they have if any with regards to the extension and improvements to the Health Centres/Services at both Gurteen & Tubbercurry.

Proposed by Cllr Gerry Murray, seconded by Cllr Aoife McLoughlin and adopted.

W38M247 I am calling on the Minister for Health, Dr. James Reilly TD and the HSE to provide €0.5m in funding to Sacred heart Hospital in Roscommon so that management and staff can continue to provide respite and rehabilitation care at the same high standard that they have provided over the years.

Proposed by Cllr Tony Ward, seconded by Cllr Tom McNamara & supported by Cllr Laurence Fallon and adopted.

W38M248 I propose that the committee meetings in future be structured in such a manner that allows HSE Forum members to discuss the relevant issues with the Local Health Managers in the local area. It would be a more common sense approach. I would appreciate any advice in relation to what decisions have to be made to allow this to happen.

Deferred

W38M249 To call on the Minister for Health & the HSE to amend the funding mechanism for the Sacred Heart Hospital, Roscommon, and other similar long-stay hospitals.

Proposed by Cllr Laurence Fallon, seconded by Cllr Tony Ward and adopted

W38M250 Given that over 24,000 people in Galway City have signed a petition calling on the Minister for Health and the HSE West not to close St. Francis Nursing Home and given the repeated and unanimous support of all the Regional Health Forum Members and

Galway City Council for St. Francis and further given the cost of (i) keeping patients unnecessarily in acute beds and (ii) the extra-ordinary costs being paid by the HSE West in transferring patients to private homes that this forum deplores the failure by the HSE West and the Minister for Health, James O'Reilly to keep St. Francis open as a Community Nursing home that this Forum once again calls on the HSE West to take immediate steps to designate some of the beds in St. Francis as step down beds and that clarification is given on whether there has been any communication with the CEO, Bill Maher and or with the SDU with a view to transferring patients from the Regional and Merlin park to St. Francis Community Nursing Home and if not that immediate contact is made with him/SDU with a view to using St. Francis Home beds as step down beds and further that reassurance is given to remaining residents in St. Francis that they do not need to move from their homes.

Proposed by Cllr Catherine Connolly seconded by Cllr Mary Hoade and adopted

370/38/12 Next Meeting of the Regional Health Forum West

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, 22nd May 2012, commencing at 2.00pm in Room 1, Education Centre, Merlin Park, Galway.

The next Committee Meeting will take place in Galway on Tuesday 15TH May 2012.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:

Cathaoirleach/Chairman

Adopted at Regional Health Forum Meeting on Tuesday 22nd May, 2012