

# **Minutes of Regional Health Forum West, ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, held on Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2012 at 2.00pm in Room 1, Education Centre, HSE Offices, Merlin Park, Galway**

Miontuairiscí Cruinnithe Chinn Bhliana an Fhórait Réigiúnach Sláinte, a tionóladh ar an Mháirt, 26 Meitheamh 2012, ag 2.00 .i.n, i Seomra 1 an tIonad Oideachais, Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte, Páirc Mheirlinne, Gaillimh

## **Chairperson**

Cllr Pádraig Conneely

## **Members Present**

Cllr Liam Blaney	Cllr Michael Hourigan	Cllr Gerry McLoughlin
Cllr Rose Brennan	Cllr Gordon Hughes	Cllr Tom McNamara
Cllr Ciaran Brogan	Cllr John Kennedy	Cllr Brian Meaney
Cllr Pat Burke	Cllr Sean MacManus	Cllr Tony Mulqueen
Cllr John Carroll	Cllr Tomás Mannion	Cllr Gerry Murray
Cllr Catherine Connolly	Cllr Frank McBrearty Jr.	Cllr Austin Francis O'Malley
Cllr Tom Connolly	Cllr Michael McBride	Cllr Annie May Reape
Cllr Shaun Cunniffe	Cllr John 'Rocky' McGrath	Cllr Damien Riedy
Cllr Ger Fahy	Cllr Sean McGowan	Cllr Kevin Sheahan
Cllr Laurence Fallon	Cllr Bernard McGuinness	Cllr Tony Ward
Cllr Michael Finnerty	Cllr Aoiffe McLoughlin	Cllr Seamus Weir
Cllr Mary Hoade		

## **Apologies**

Cllr Gerry Reynolds  
Cllr Paula McNamara

## **Absent**

Cllr Michael Crowe  
Cllr Richard Butler  
Cllr Tim Broderick

## **In Attendance**

Bernard Gloster on behalf of Regional Director of Operations  
Tony Canavan, Chief Operations Officer, GUH  
Pam Connolly on behalf of Asst National Director, Human Resources  
Ann Doherty, CEO, Mid Western Hospital Group  
Liam Fogarty on behalf of Area Manager Galway/Roscommon PCCC Services  
Bill Maher, CEO, Galway Roscommon Hospitals Group  
Caitriona Meehan, Consumer Affairs Area Office  
Liam Minihan, Asst National Director of Finance  
Shirley Murphy, Consumer Affairs Area Office  
Paudie O'Riordan, Area Operations Manager West, National Ambulance Service  
Chris Rudland, General Manager, Consumer Affairs Area Office

## **380/40/12 Congratulations**

The Chairperson extended congratulations to two Forum members who were recently elected Mayors; Cllr Frank McBrearty Jr for Donegal County Council and Cllr Gerry McLoughlin for Limerick City Council.

### **381/40/12 Point of Order – Questions and Motions**

Cllr K Sheahan queried if Standing Orders allow a Chairperson to submit Questions or Motions at the Regional Health Forum meetings. It was confirmed for members that Standing Orders do not exclude the Forum Chairperson from submitting Questions and/or Motions. Cllr Sheahan advised that he will consider raising this issue as an amendment to the Standing Orders, at a future meeting. Some members felt it is the Chairperson's right to submit Questions and Motions and that the Chairperson of the Forum should also receive an allowance.

### **382/40/12 Election of Chairperson**

Chairperson, Cllr P Conneely sought nominations for the position of incoming Chairperson. Cllr Conneely was proposed by Cllr T Connolly and seconded by Cllr R Brennan. As there were no other nominations, Cllr Conneely was deemed elected and retained his position as Chairperson of the Regional Health Forum West.

Cllr Conneely thanked his proposer, seconder and all members present. Members extended their congratulations to the Chairperson.

Cllr B Meaney congratulated the Chairperson on his re-election and suggested that focus is required on the relevance of the Forum. He raised concerns on the recent media reports regarding proposed new management structures in the Mid West region, which he felt were without any consultation or discussion with members. He queried the costs of this new management structure. It was agreed that A Doherty, CEO of MWHG would address these issues later in the meeting.

Several members also queried the role of the 'Trusts' which were recently announced. It was agreed that these matters would be addressed later in the meeting.

Cllr K Sheahan requested details on the present status of the Emergency Department at St John's Hospital, Limerick. He is happy to receive this information in writing.

**Action:** A written update will issue to Cllr Sheahan.

### **383/40/12 Election of Vice Chairperson**

The Chairperson sought nominations for position of Vice Chairperson. Cllr M Hourigan was proposed by Cllr T Mulqueen and seconded by Cllr Damien Riedy. As there were no other nominations, Cllr Hourigan was deemed elected and retained his position as Vice Chairperson of the Regional Health Forum West.

### **384/40/12 Forum Committee**

The Chairperson reminded members of recent discussions around the format of the current Forum Committee. He proposed that the future Forum Committee will hear presentations from the HSE. The next Committee which takes place on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2012 will hear presentations on Child Health, which has been raised a number of times by Cllr Ciaran Brogan, and the Fair Deal Scheme which has been raised by several members.

Cllr L Blaney queried the content of the Children's Health presentation and advised that Cllr Brogan had specific requests for information. Management confirmed that they have Cllr Brogan's requirements and will endeavour to include these items in the presentation.

### **385/40/12 Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2012 were proposed by Cllr J Kennedy, seconded by Cllr AF O'Malley and adopted.

## **386/40/12 Matters Arising**

### **MGH – Cancer Patients**

Cllr S Weir raised a query in relation to a Cancer Patient who wishes to receive treatment in Galway, but due to what he perceived as administration issues could not be released from Mayo General Hospital where he/she is currently receiving treatment.

**Action:** Cllr Weir has been invited to resubmit his representation for examination, in respect of the individual case.

### **Tully / Ballinahown Health Centre**

Cllr C Connolly queried the status of the GP service at Ballinahown Health Centre.

Managers advised that the issue relates to the provision of appropriate telecommunication facilities by Eircom and that the HSE were assisting the General Practitioner in pursuing this matter.

**Action:** Further clarification and details on the matter will issue to Cllr Connolly.

### **Special Delivery Unit Funding**

Cllr C Connolly requested further details and clarification on the SDU Funding; has the once off funding finished, and what other funding is available?

T Canavan referred to a previous response issued advising that GUH received once off funding from the SDU in December 2011 which was used to purchase 28 private nursing home beds for a three month duration, to deal with transitions from the acute setting. The transfers from hospital to nursing homes using this SDU funding are on a once off basis. This funding is now close to exhaustion. The 2<sup>nd</sup> type of funding is continuous and is used to fund convalescent care.

**Action:** T Canavan will provide Cllr Connolly with further details/figures regarding the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tranche of funding.

### **HSE Performance Reports**

Cllr S MacManus queried the circulation of information on HSE performance reports, as he felt he did not receive same. Cllr MacManus was advised that the information was circulated by email to all members on 13<sup>th</sup> June.

**Action:** The information will be resent to Cllr MacManus.

### **Bed Utilisation Study**

Cllr S MacManus requested an update on the Bed Utilisation Study of Sligo General Hospital. He also raised queries regarding the reliance of the services and use of agency staff, and the concerns expressed by Nursing Staff that the request for agency may not be met.

B Gloster highlighted the challenges around agency provision, including current constraints of the services and dependency on financial resources.

**Action:** A copy of the Bed Utilisation Study will be circulated to members when it becomes available.

### **Rehired Retirees**

B Gloster advised that managers have been requested to assess their requirements for rehiring retirees, the impact of retirements on their services and the challenges they face. It is now HSE Policy that hiring of retirees will conclude no later than September 2012, after this rehires will be on the basis of RDO approval.

**Action:** Cllr MacManus may submit his specific queries on this issue in writing for the September meeting.

### **Breakdown % of Absentees**

**Action:** Details were issued to Cllr Riedy by email on 22<sup>nd</sup> June; however, they will be resent to him.

## **Blue Line Smoking Ban**

The Chairperson, Cllr Pdraig Conneely raised concerns on the smoking ban at Galway University Hospitals and queried if there would be any relaxation of the policy.

HSE Management confirmed that the Policy remains and again highlighted for members that exemptions are granted to some patients after clinical consultation.

## **387/40/12 Chairman's Business**

### **Apologies**

The Chairperson acknowledged apologies from Cllr Gerry Reynolds and Paula McNamara.

### **Motion from Donegal County Council**

The Chairperson advised members that Donegal County Council recently copied to each of the Forum Offices, for the attention of the Forum members, a motion to the Minister for Health *'to carry out, as a matter of urgency, a review of the Long Term Illness Scheme with a view to including Long Term Debilitating Illnesses which are not presently recognised by the present Scheme'*.

HSE West have responded to Donegal County Council advising them that responsibility for such schemes lies directly with the Minister and suggesting that if they want issues raised, their nominated members to the Forum can put down questions or motions.

### **Meeting with Minister Reilly**

Chairperson advised that members are being asked for their views on how local democracy can be improved in terms of health matters and how the Forums can be improved to enable a greater role for members.

Members received a Feedback Questionnaire for completion and some recent information / announcements on the health reform programme, which may assist with its completion. The findings of the four regions will be collated and presented back to the Minister after the summer.

**Action:** Members are asked to consider these matters and return their completed questionnaire to the Forum Office, by Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012 at the latest. The Questionnaire will be emailed to members also.

## **388/40/12 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:

### **W40Q960& 961 – Cllr Laurence Fallon, RCH Admissions and Attendances at ED**

Cllr Fallon acknowledged the response given and felt that the information provided showed that the throughput of inpatient discharges was down by half the previous year. The ED attendances figures show a significant decrease in the number of people attending. This suggests they are going elsewhere and their first port of call is not Roscommon Hospital, where there is an excellent facility not being used.

T Canavan advised that inpatient decreases reflected in the figures is down to interpretation and would describe the level of increase in May alone as very significant. This reflects an active policy of transferring work that is appropriate to Roscommon and equates as progress not downgrading. ED Figures are also open to interpretation and reflect the changing service demands.

### **W40Q962 – Cllr Laurence Fallon, Social Welfare Payments**

Cllr Fallon's query relates to the entitlement of persons in receipt of job seekers allowance who are under the age of 25 and may be on a reduced allowance and who in turn may not be the dependent of medical card holder parents. It seems that the HSE do not deem an individual living at home with their parents as independent, and do so only if their Social Welfare Income is between 100 and 144 euro, whereas is if the

individual is receiving job seekers allowance of 164 euro they are not deemed Independent and cannot apply for a medical card. The HSE have not moved alongside the Department of Social Protection. Anyone of full SW payment for their category should be entitled to medical card if living at home. This is a public service policy anomaly between medical card holder limits and the social welfare limits for those under 25, living at home.

B Gloster noted Cllr Fallon's concerns and advised that an assessment would be requested from PCRS.

**Action:** Details from the assessment on this issue will be circulated to Forum members.

#### **W40Q963 – Cllr Laurence Fallon, Sacred Heart Hospital**

Cllr Fallon highlighted that the Sacred Heart Home is an excellent facility which provides inpatient, long term and rehab care. In relation to the Fair Deal Package, it was felt that the other services being provided by the hospitals were not being considered when it came to funding and there is a need for extra funding.

B Gloster advised that this issue is not specific to SHH, but the same across the nursing home sector. There is pressure now since the centralization of the Fair Deal Scheme and the HSE must now earn money back based on occupancy at nursing homes. There are extensive negotiations with the national finance directorate on this issue. HSE will not compromise on the importance of rehab beds at these facilities.

#### **W40Q964 – Cllr Brian Meaney, hba1c Point of Care Testing Machine, MWRH**

Cllr Meaney further queried when/what date the testing machine will be in use?

A Doherty advised that a number of steps must be taken before the machine is used and envisages commencement of its use towards the end of the summer.

#### **W40Q965 – Cllr Brian Meaney, ED Times Ennis Hospital**

Cllr Meaney queried the unavailability of data for MWRH Ennis considering the HealthStat figures for March show that all waiting times at MWRH EDs are outside the 6 Hours deadline?

**Action:** A Doherty will examine and revert to Cllr Meaney directly.

#### **W40Q967 – Cllr Brian Meaney, Finance and Budget Compliance HSE West and Car Parking Charges**

Cllr Meaney queried the following in relation to the response received:

- 1) What does the RDO Office overtime expenditure relate to?
- 2) Are the figures received year-to-date or for a full year? Will car parking charges be rolled out to all hospitals?
- 3) What is the income from car parking charges spent on?

The RDO Office expenditure relates to overtime costs, charged to the RDO Office, by HR central offices in Manorhamilton. 4300 retired from the HSE earlier this year. These exits were processed centrally in Manorhamilton and included the overtime costs required for staff to process the pension details, calculate payments, background checks, establishing employment history within the HSE and former Health Boards, etc. in a short timeframe. Car Park charges are income to the HSE; the more collected the more can be used for services.

**Action:** A written explanation of the distinction between the income from car parks directly accruing to the HSE and the income and/or charges and/or contract fees accruing to private providers for the operation of car parks will be provided to members.

#### **W40Q968 – Cllr Mary Hoade, Retired Staff**

Cllr Hoade queried if those posts recently vacated and not filled due to the embargo will eventually be filled permanently and what's a reasonable period to continue to hire retirees?

B Gloster advised that there is a generic moratorium however some declared grades are exempt. Depending of where the vacancy is the emphasis is to redirect, find the budget to fill the vacancy on a permanent basis and discontinue the hiring of retirees. From the grace period on 29<sup>th</sup> January, members should expect to see

substantial reductions by September. Consultant replacements can be more difficult as the recruitment process can take between 9 – 12 months.

**W40Q969 – Cllr Mary Hoade, Ambulance Base Tuam**

Cllr Hoade queried what is meant by ‘Limited service’ and ‘Live’ time basis?

P O’Riordan confirmed that there are limits to the service which can be provided in Tuam at present, however, the ambulance services are making a strong case to employ six additional frontline staff. In the meantime, ‘live time’ refers to the regional control room in Castlebar being able to see at any stage where crews are placed and deploy/direct them to operate from Tuam. Tuam will effectively become another base for the West.

**W40Q970 – Cllr Mary Hoade, Waiting Times ED, GUH**

Cllr Hoade queried if the MAU closure in May was due to staffing issues?

T Canavan advised there is constant vigilance in this regard. There are difficulties getting suitably qualified staff in particular nurses. An average of 17 patients waiting for beds six months ago is a bad day now. T Canavan advised that there is a cancer assessment unit on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the hospital, however, if necessary, those cancer patients who are sick at home must come through ED as they need to be fully assessed before going to the ward.

**W40Q971 – Cllr Mary Hoade, Mapping of Services**

Cllr Hoade queried where the ‘mapping of services’ was at and advised that users of the Mental Health Services in Headford are concerned that services will not be retained.

L Fogarty advised that there is no anticipated reduction in services and the mapping exercise is ongoing.

**Action:** Further details will be provided to Cllr Hoade.

**W40Q972 – Cllr Tom McNamara, Provisions for Smokers at Acute Psychiatric Unit**

Cllr McNamara welcomed the exemptions but advised that there is confusion on the ground around who is exempted and advised that HSE needs to put the message out to the service users.

B Gloster advised that the hospital is a smoke free campus, in line with the recently introduced policy and the general *smoking ban in the workplace* policy. It is acknowledged that some of the service users are effectively residents and these exceptions are being pursued sensitively but there are Health Promotion and dependency aspects.

**Action:** B Gloster will engage with the Director of Nursing in relation to make a leaflet/information available to service users.

**W40Q973 – Cllr Tom McNamara, Colonoscopy – Waiting List, MWRH Ennis**

Cllr McNamara queried when the final inspection will take place and cautioned that it would be terrible if the reason for the Endoscopy Unit not getting through the inspection was due to the waiting list.

A Doherty advised that the final meeting has taken place and the report is now awaited. She reassured members that they are committed to dealing with the waiting list.

The target date for opening the new Unit is 26<sup>th</sup> July, the move will happen on a phased basis and there are ongoing discussions with staff.

**W40Q974 – Cllr Sean MacManus, Mammography Services**

Cllr MacManus requested an updated on Mammography Services in Sligo:

- When/if ever Mammography services would be returned to Sligo?
- What is the situation in relation to the Machine, is it a new machine or an upgrade, is the money ring-fenced for the machine? How many days a month will mammography be available?
- Cllr A McLoughlin also queried if the provision of services was agreed with Breastcheck?

B Gloster and T Canavan reassured members that there is every intention to provide follow up mammography services in Sligo. The difficulty is maintaining the skill set as mammographers are a scarce resource and it is important to have adequate skill set in the main centre. There are 2.4 mammographers in GUH. There are radiographers currently being processed by the National Recruitment Service, however, these are not mammography trained. There are plans to train radiographers to become mammographers and to look at recruiting outside the State if staff can't be sourced in Ireland, the HSE have already appointed a recruitment firm. Alternatives include rehire retirees and/or use of existing screening services by Breastcheck. Equipment is a separate issue, the RDO gave his commitment to source capital to use the machinery and the Minister is supportive. There is no lack of effort and the commitment will be honoured.

Initial tests take place in Galway, and Sligo will provide follow up mammography for those users. Once staff are in place there will be no issues with providing the service. Breastcheck have agreed in principle to assist with follow up screening; T Canavan wrote to them today.

**Action:** Further clarification will be provided to members regarding the equipment.

#### **W40Q975 – Cllr Sean MacManus, HIQA Report, St John's Hospital Sligo**

Cllr MacManus asked what steps have been taken by HSE Management in the North West to address the actions set out in the last HIQA inspection and advised that visits / inspections by HIQA can cause trauma and concern to staff.

Is there not a counter argument that when HIQA inspects and makes representations, given constraints of funding, etc., reductions in beds something to do with HIQA?

B Gloster advised that there is a constant dilemma in all public services regarding approaches to regulation and inspection, and that the HSE could not speak of behalf of HIQA.

Complying with regulations set out by HIQA has been a contributory factor in the reduction of beds, however, there is a requirement by society to bring standards of care up.

#### **W40Q976 – Cllr Sean MacManus, Wisdom Services, Cregg House, Sligo**

Cllr Sean MacManus advised that there is a perception that the HSE did not handle this issue well.

There is a feeling that Wisdom Services were forced to withdraw services and that the services provided was probably of a higher calibre than what the HSE can provide. Will Cregg House remain open, how will the HSE proceed now and will there be loss of staff?

B Gloster highlighted that there are few situations when a service provider withdraws and it is seen as satisfactory. Not sure if any response will address points raised. It was the decision of the Daughters of Wisdom to withdraw services. The HSE must now work with them to ensure smooth transition and continue to provide services to those who need it. Sligo services have been actively engaged to find solutions.

All service providers had the reduction of 3% applied. Wisdom Services were not targeted specifically.

Similarly there have been two withdrawals in the Mid West, funding is a factor with every agency and there are many factors why a religious order will withdraw services. Mr Gloster advised that he is not aware of any disability service providers having reductions in staff other than retirement or moratorium.

#### **W40Q977 – Cllr Tomás Mannion, Mental Health Services, Galway**

Cllr Mannion advised that he was not satisfied with the response received; he would like more information regarding reconfiguration in Mental Health Services and felt that forum members should be consulted and involved in any decisions made. Forum Members should meet with the Regional Mapping Group as local knowledge is important and it gives members an opportunity to do something positive. He has asked this question several times and felt information requested should be issued.

B Gloster regretted that Cllr Mannion felt left in the dark and advised that colleagues are attempting to implement national policy in relation to Mental Health Services. He advised that there are plans to hold a

Galway Roscommon Briefing on the 20<sup>th</sup> July and he will request that members receive a detailed briefing on this issue at the briefing.

**Action:** C Cunningham will update members on Mental Health Services Galway at the Galway PCCC July Briefing.

**W40Q978 – Cllr Catherine Connolly, MRSA Testing**

Cllr Connolly advised that the specific matter being raised has been resolved for the individual however, every time this service user went back into hospital she endured isolation even though repeated testing and sampling showed she was clear of MRSA. If guidelines suggest repeated sampling, when does the sampling stop, i.e. if there are already 6 clear samples?

T Canavan expressed regret that the service user had to go through such rigorous screening and advised that this is a very technical area.

**Action:** T Canavan will check with experts in this area and provide further details and clarification to Cllr Connolly.

**W40Q979 – Cllr Catherine Connolly, Properties Leased / Rented by HSE West**

Cllr Connolly acknowledged the positive decrease in HSE property rentals/leases, however, the 2009 costs for rentals were lower than 2012 figures with three new buildings having been added since. The HSE is also now opening a primary care centre which they will lease at 240k for 25 years, even though they have 150 acres available close to the PCT site, with permanent buildings. Can the Chairperson influence the Minister?

**W40Q980 – Cllr Catherine Connolly, Child Care Development Clinics**

Cllr Connolly queried how the HSE can stand over the current waiting list for those waiting for child care development clinics. Can the HSE provide further clarification as to why there are such waiting lists, what is the plan to deal with this? What staff is required and when will they be employed?

L Fogarty advised that there are plans in place, the 7 – 9 months waiting list is prioritised and screening will begin in June. Centralised clinics will be used to deal with the backlog and the staff resource issues.

B Gloster agreed that the waiting lists are not acceptable and that the explanation is simply a lack of staff.

**Action:** The Galway PCCC Plan in relation to the Child Care Development Clinics will be provided in writing to Cllr Connolly.

**W40Q981 – Cllr Catherine Connolly, Private Nursing Home Oughterard**

Cllr Connolly highlighted that although St Francis Home is now closed the HSE are using a mix of private and public nursing homes. Some public services nurses are now working in a private nursing home while being paid by the public services. When will this practice cease, what stage are the legal proceedings at and will the HSE recoup the pay involved?

B Gloster advised that the matter is currently before the District Court Galway and the HSE therefore cannot comment until the proceedings come to conclusion. The next court date is this Friday. The recoupment of public nurses pay will be subject to the outcome of the proceedings.

**W40Q983 – Cllr John Carroll, Front Line Staff, MWRH Limerick**

Cllr Carroll advised that he made representations to the RDO on a specific case whereby a night duty nurse had 16 patients under her care and an elderly patient suffered minor strokes. The nurse in question advised that family that resources were limited; the patient was restrained by security. There were suggestions of dehydration and limited bed clothes. Cllr Carroll advised that this is not an isolated incident and that it is worrying that Tipperary signed up to the supposed centre of excellence at MWRH.

A Doherty advised that in situations like this members need to make immediate contact with her and allow an inquiry to take place.

**Action:** The specifics and facts of this case, once provided, will be examined and investigated.

#### **W40Q984 – Cllr John Carroll, Fair Deal Scheme Backlog**

Cllr Carroll queried the delay and requested an exact timeline for dealing with the backlog. What is the indicative average waiting time for processing an application?

**Action:** Further details will issue to Cllr Carroll on the average waiting time for processing an application.

#### **W40Q985 – Cllr John Carroll, Health Care Facilities**

Cllr Carroll queried when a brochure outlining Health Care facilities at Nenagh Hospital would be made available.

A Doherty advised that there are plans to provide an overview of services at Nenagh Hospital, the information will also be available on the internet.

**Action:** Information on the services at Nenagh Hospital will be circulated to members as soon as it is available.

#### **W40Q986 – Cllr Padraig Conneely, Staff Suspension**

Cllr Conneely noted the reply received and asked again if a staff member has been suspended at GUH, what form is the enquiry taking and when will results be published? He queried the line management and asked how the situation came to light?

T Canavan repeated that matters pertaining to individual members of staff do not fall under the remit of the Regional Health Forum and as such the HSE has no comment to make in relation to this matter except to confirm that an investigation has commenced.

#### **W40Q987 – Cllr Padraig Conneely, Waiting Lists**

Cllr Conneely highlighted that the validated waiting list remains at approx. 40,000 and asked how someone can be on a waiting list for 6 years?

T Canavan advised that this matter should be put in context, there were total attendances of 217,000 in 2011 and of the 40,000, 20,000 are waiting less than six months.

The plan is to focus with SDU on the Outpatient Waiting List, it is unlikely that any reduction will be visible before September, however, in working with the SDU results should be apparent in 18months – 2 years. Of the 8000 waiting for Orthopaedic services, the longest wait time is 6.5 years.

#### **W40Q988 – Cllr Padraig Conneely, Absenteeism**

Cllr Conneely highlighted that absenteeism has increased from April to May. He asked what are the HSE are advising the DOH regarding this type of entitlement?

T Canavan advised that 4.5% absenteeism represents a cost to services and patients. He did not agree that the 4.5% are not genuine and felt that there is a minority not genuine and these are being dealt with appropriately and using the systems in place.

### **389/40/12 Motions**

Due to a lack of quorum Motions were deferred until the next meeting.

### **390/40/12 Proposed New Management Structures/Trusts at Mid West and Galway Roscommon**

Cllr B Meaney and other members requested details on the proposed new management structures or 'Trusts' for the Mid West Health Services. They queried the costs involved and if a benefit analysis had taken place. Members advised that they have learned that the management of the hospital is controlled externally and that Ennis and Nenagh Hospitals are now managed centrally. Although the HSE is now depoliticised, members locally want to see equity of access and representatives need to know what will this mean to the future budgets and services of smaller hospitals and what are the extra costs of this new management function. Members are being advised that service issues are simply due to a lack of staff and now it appears

there are new layers of management. Waiting Lists remain unchanged, a previous body of experience has left the system and now new management structures are being developed.

A Doherty advised that there are ongoing issues in relation to staffing. Progress has been made with waiting lists. Governance arrangements are developed nationally and HSE management implement policy. The MW Management Structure is not another layer, if anything it is reducing layers and there has been extensive redeployment to the frontline. Members know that A Doherty has been in post since January and has been asked to organise six hospitals together as one unit to make them better for patients and services. Clinicians are central to the leadership of services. MWRHG did not publish anything in the media on this issue and would not be disrespectful to representatives. Local hospitals will not lose out if anything the reorganisation will be better for the hospitals. It is expected that the Minister will publish a Framework for Smaller Hospitals.

Galway Roscommon members also asked the same questions in relation to health services in the West. Cllr C Connolly asked the CEO of the Group to explain the new 'Trusts', when GUH already has the CEO, T Canavan and Dr O'Keeffe? This appears to be another layer and no information has been provided to members. Some members requested a briefing paper on this issue.

B Maher advised that he was asked in January to oversee four hospitals in the Galway Roscommon Hospital Group with one budget and one staff ceiling. This includes the development of the smaller hospitals. To date GUH has had far too many services deliver with the resources available, however with the Group we can now see reductions in waiting lists. As with Mid West Hospital Group, more management have not been added, there are currently six managers running four hospitals, with much redeployment to the frontline. GRHG has an executive council of six clinicians and five managers making decisions.

The 'Trusts' being mentioned are linked to Department of Health Policy. Both CEO's felt that they have kept members informed on the internal structures of their Hospital Groups and that they are not in a position to comment more generally on DOH Policy.

### **391/40/12 Next Meeting of the Regional Health Forum West**

The next meeting of the Forum will take place on Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> September 2012, commencing at 2.00pm in Room 1, Education Centre, Merlin Park, Galway.

The next Forum Committee meeting will take place on 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2012 in Manorhamilton, Co Leitrim.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**Signed:**

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**Cathaoirleach/Chairman**

Adopted at Regional Health Forum Meeting on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2012