

**Minutes of Regional Health Forum West meeting, held on Tuesday, 27th
September 2011 at 2.00pm in Room 1, Education Centre,
HSE Offices, Merlin Park, Galway**

Miontuairiscí cruinnithe an Fhórait Réigiúnach Sláinte, ar an Mháirt, 27 Meán Fómhair 2011, ag 2.00
.i.n, sa an tIonad Oideachais, Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte, Páirc Mheirlinne, Gaillimh.

Chairperson

Councillor Pádraig Conneely

Members Present

Cllr Liam Blaney	Cllr Laurence Fallon	Cllr Brian Meaney
Cllr Declan Bree	Cllr Mary Hoade	Cllr Tony Mulqueen
Cllr Rose Brennan	Cllr Michael Hourigan	Cllr Gerry Murray
Cllr Tim Broderick	Cllr Gordon Hughes	Cllr Tomas Mannion
Cllr Ciaran Brogan	Cllr John Kennedy	Cllr Austin Francis O'Malley
Cllr Pat Burke	Cllr Frank McBrearty Jr	Cllr Annie May Reape
Cllr Richard Butler	Cllr Michael McBride	Cllr Gerry Reynolds
Cllr Catherine Connolly	Cllr Sean McGowan	Cllr Jerome Scanlan
Cllr Tom Connolly	Cllr Aoiffe McLoughlin	Cllr Tony Ward
Cllr Shaun Cunniffe	Cllr Gerry McLoughlin	Cllr Seamus Weir
Cllr Ger Fahy	Cllr Paula McNamara	

Apologies

Cllr Michael Finnerty
Cllr John 'Rocky' McGrath
Cllr Tom McNamara
Cllr Kevin Sheahan

Absent

Cllr John Carroll
Cllr Michael Crowe
Cllr Bernard McGuinness

In Attendance

Mr John Hennessy, Regional Director of Operations (RDO)
Mr Tony Canavan for LHM, Galway PCCC
Ms Catherine Cunningham, GM, Roscommon PCCC
Mr John Hayes, ISA Manager, Donegal
Ms Chris Kane, Regional Co-ordinator for Acute Services
Ms Marie Kennedy, SAO, Parliamentary Affairs West
Mr Damien McCallion, ISA Manager, Sligo-Leitrim-West Cavan
Mr Liam Minihan, Asst National Director, Finance
Mr Frank Murphy, ISA Manager, Mayo
Ms Shirley Murphy, Section Officer, Parliamentary Affairs West
Mr Paudie O'Riordan, Area Operations Manager West, National Ambulance Service
Mr Francis Rogers, Asst National Director, Human Resources
Mr Chris Rudland, Consumer Affairs Area Manager

348/35/11 Motions

As Motions were not dealt with at the last Forum meeting held on 21st June 2011, it was agreed that Motions would be brought to the top of the Agenda for this meeting. It was also agreed that all members who remained at the previous meeting would have their Motions dealt with first. Members present were: *Cllrs Catherine Connolly, Declan Bree, Frank McBrearty, Michael McBride, Bernard McGuinness, Brian Meaney, Tom McNamara and Pdraig Conneely.*

Cllr Declan Bree W15M124 That a copy of the contract between the HSE and Mount Carmel Medical Group for the proposed development of a private co-located hospital on the grounds of Sligo General Hospital, be made available to the members of the Regional Health Forum.
Councillor Declan Bree requested this Motion be deferred to the next meeting of the Forum.

Cllr Declan Bree W33M215 'That the text "seven (7)" be deleted from Standing Order 25.3 and replaced with the text "ten (10)" '

The amended Standing Order 25.3 would then read "Every question should be received ten (10) clear days before the Forum meeting

ORIGINAL MOTION WITHDRAWN AT THE PREVIOUS MEETING, AND REPLACED WITH THIS MOTION, AS AGREED WITH CHAIRPERSON.

Proposed by Cllr Declan Bree, seconded by Cllr Catherine Connolly and adopted.

Cllr Catherine Connolly W34M219 & That this Forum fully endorses the provision of residential health care in public nursing homes for our elderly in need of such services and more particularly given the serious problems that have emerged in relation to the provision of private nursing home care both in Ireland and England and that the Forum calls once again on the HSE West and the Minister for Health not to close St Francis Nursing Home and moreover to clarify the position in relation to this home all other public nursing homes in Galway City and County and the Health Forum West Region in relation to capacity, empty beds/wards, number of patients in each home and waiting lists.
Proposed by Cllr Catherine Connolly, seconded by several members and adopted.

W35M226 Given the many motions passed unanimously by this Health Forum and also Galway City Council calling on the HSE West to keep St Francis Home open as Community Nursing Home and given the very positive assessment by HIQA in relation to the high standard of care and treatment in evidence there and given the backlog in the Fair Deal Program and further given that 33 acute beds in the Regional Hospital are currently occupied by elderly patients who should but cannot be transferred and given the scandalous waste of taxpayer's money in renting private buildings in Galway and in particular almost 900,000 Euro per year on one HSE West Building alone on the Seamus Quirke Road, that this Regional Health Forum calls on the HSE West not to close St Francis Community Nursing Home and further calls on the Minister for Health to intervene and prevent the closure and further to take all necessary steps to ensure the continuity of the facility as a Public Nursing Home.
Proposed by Cllr Catherine Connolly, seconded by several members and adopted.

Action: After discussion, it was agreed that a meeting arranged by Galway PCCC to meet with Residents and Family Members, would be postponed and/or alternative arrangements would be made to communicate with them.

- Cllr Frank McBrearty Jnr**
W33M216 I am calling on the HSE to have the Rheumatology services restored to LGH.
Proposed by Cllr Frank McBrearty, seconded by Cllr Declan Bree and adopted.
- Cllr Brian Meaney**
W34M217 That this forum request MacDonalds Ireland to stop marketing to children, with clowns.
Cllr Brian Meaney requested this Motion be withdrawn.
- Forum Sub Group re Committees**
W34M220 If recommendations around the composition and geographic locations of the Forum Committees are carried, that Standing Orders be amended accordingly.
Proposed by Cllr Austin Francis O'Malley, seconded by Cllr Pdraig Conneely and adopted.
- Cllr B Meaney**
W35M221 That this forum acknowledges the success of the Men C vaccine in Ireland over the last ten years.
Proposed by Cllr Brian Meaney, seconded by Cllr Declan Bree and adopted.
- Cllr T Ward**
W35M222 I am calling on the Minister for Health, Mr James Reilly TD, and the HSE to provide an air ambulance service for the patients of County Roscommon and the catchment area of Roscommon County Hospital.
- It was agreed to amend this Motion to read as follows:
'I am calling on the Minister for Health, Mr James Reilly TD, and the HSE to provide an air ambulance service for the patients of the HSE West Region, including County Roscommon and the catchment area of Roscommon County Hospital.'
Proposed by Cllr Tony Ward, seconded by Cllr Laurence Fallon and adopted.
- Cllr J Scanlan**
W35M223 That every effort be made to reinstate the Respite Beds which closed at St. Ita's Hospital Newcastle West as of September 12th.
Proposed by Cllr Jerome Scanlan, seconded by Cllr Tony Ward and adopted.
- Action:** Mr John Hennessy agreed to revert to Cllr Scanlan directly, on this matter.
- Cllr C Brogan**
W35M224 I propose that we discuss the implications of our hospitals being over budget and as a result the impact of services being cut and directly affecting patient care.
Proposed by Cllr Ciaran Brogan, seconded by Cllr Frank McBrearty Jr and adopted.
- Cllr L Fallon**
W35M225 That in light of the chaotic overcrowding that has developed at U.C. Hospital Galway in particular and indeed at all Hospitals in the region I call on the HSE to review the current blanket ban on the assessment of Children and the blanket ban on Ambulances calling to Roscommon Co. Hospital irrespective how minor the patients problem is and to further reduce overcrowding at all hospitals in the region that an emergency service should be available to assess patients at Roscommon Co. Hospital on a 24 hour basis.
Proposed by Cllr Laurence Fallon, seconded by Cllr Tony Ward and adopted.
- Cllr D Bree**
W35M227 That the Regional Health Forum West expresses its concern at the outsourcing of health services to private limited companies and calls on the Government to ensure that all sections of our national health service is maintained under public ownership and control.

Councillor Declan Bree requested this Motion be deferred to the next meeting of the Forum.

**Cllr S
Cunniffe
W35M228** I call on the HSE to put together criteria in relation to taking action against recipient's who benefit from rent subsidies or rent allowances administered by the HSE to put in place procedures to review all payments in light of any reports of anti-social behaviour by any tenants who are in receipt of rent subsidies or rent allowances.

(Please forward me details with regard to schemes that are available to the HSE to administer actions against tenants who are making life difficult for their neighbours who are in receipt of rent benefits and allowances.)

Cllr Shaun Cunniffe requested this Motion be withdrawn.

349/35/11 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 21st June 2011 were proposed by Councillor Mary Hoade, seconded by Councillor Tony Ward and adopted.

350/35/11 Matters Arising

Roscommon County Hospital

Members requested the HSE to review again the closure of the ED at RCH. This decision is impacting on surrounding counties, including GUH.

Mr John Hennessy, RDO advised that the Special delivery unit is now working with GUH and the Acute Medicine Programme, the Action Plan for smaller hospitals and the Action plan for HSE West are now underway. The fulltime Project Manager, Jenny Mannion is now in place and focusing on the expansion of the existing range of services at Roscommon and possible new specialist services. Figures show that 17 patients with Roscommon addresses attended GUH, this figure could include some patients who would have attended Galway in any case. RDO restated that the changes at Roscommon Hospital are being driven by clinical safety issues and have been widely reported on. He acknowledged and appreciated the transport points and agreed to look at responsiveness.

Members queried the numbers recorded for Roscommon attendees at GUH; they felt that some patients were choosing not to travel, have no transport to travel or are attending other surrounding hospitals.

J Mannion advised Members that the focus is to utilize smaller hospitals appropriately to allow the larger centres to deal with emergency specialist treatment. This will involve some capital development. Routine and diagnostic work would continue at the smaller hospitals.

Action: The Action Plan for HSE West will be presented to Forum Members at a future meeting.

Travel and Subsistence Details

Cllr Brian Meaney requested a copy of details recently circulated to Cllr Declan Bree, in response to his queries at previous meetings. Cllr Meaney had initially raised this issue.

Action: Details will be circulated to Cllr Meaney and all Forum members.

NCHD – Junior Doctors

Cllr P Conneely raised the issue of overseas NCHDs waiting to be assigned to their posts in HSE West Hospitals.

J Hennessy and C Kane advised the following:

- 147 Doctors accepted the offer to travel to Ireland to work. As per legislative procedure each Doctor must go through a statutory process.
- Some Doctors arrived in Ireland earlier than scheduled.
- A large number of Doctors failed the initial examinations and are now awaiting a resit.
- These Doctors are free to return home at any stage and were given a once off payment to travel to Ireland.
- Rules governing employment of overseas Doctors are set by the Irish Medical Council and the HSE must adhere to these rules.
- 18 Doctors were assigned to the West
- 8 Doctors are currently in post and working
- 12 are waiting to sit exams
- These 12 are not being paid, are not permitted to practice and currently attend at HSE Hospitals and shadow Clinical Teams as Observers.

Action: Details on the percentage of these Doctors who did not succeed in their initial examinations, will be circulated to Cllr P Conneely and copied to all Members.

Property rented by the HSE / rented to third parties by the HSE

Cllr Declan Bree referred to responses awaited in relation to his previous Questions regarding HSE Properties. He highlighted that two years ago when he initially requested the information, he was advised that it could not be released as there was a tendering process underway and the information could therefore not be released as it was commercially sensitive and wouldn't be appropriate to release it into the public domain, at that time.

Cllr Bree now insisted on openness and transparency and again requested the information be released, now that the tendering process was completed 8 months ago. Cllr Bree requested this information within the next two weeks.

RDO advised Cllr Bree that the HSE provides information wherever possible, however, there are sometimes limits and constraints in some cases, in particular where information is determined as commercially sensitive. The Estate Manager, Mr Joe Molloy attended the last 2 meetings, however, this item was not reached on the Agenda in both cases. Mr Molloy was not available to attend today's meeting.

Action: It was agreed that Mr Joe Molloy, Estates Manager and RDO will follow up directly with Cllr Bree, on this matter.

W33Q733 – Contract Work

Cllr Bree outlined how he requested a response to his Question W33Q733 last May and was advised that the information was being collated. He advised that he received a response to his Question this morning, before today's meeting.

Action: F Rogers will supply further details to Cllr Bree and all members, including when the practice ceased, how many were re-engaged and trends.

Mid West Reconfiguration

Cllr Ger Fahy wished to highlight the urgent need for resources in the Mid West. He highlighted that MWRH Reconfiguration costs are not acknowledged in the HSE Finances and the Mid West Over Expenditure. He requested that MW Reconfiguration now be taken into consideration in relation to its budget/finances.

Action: L Minihan will circulate further details in relation to Mid West funding and Reconfiguration Costs, to all Mid West Members.

W34Q778 - Private Companies

Action: Cllr Catherine Connolly requested further details regarding monies paid to the Private Companies, listed in the initial response she received to her question.

Mid West Retirees

Cllr McLoughlin queried what provision the HSE have in place to deal with the upcoming retirement of Consultants in the Mid West area?

RDO acknowledged that this is a significant issue and the HSE should know shortly the impact these exits may have. HSE staff are already obliged to give one month's notice of their intention to retire and Management have asked staff to give three months advance notice in this instance.

Action: Once details become available of those staff intending to retire, information will be circulated to Members, where possible.

351/35/11 Chairman's Business

The Chairman acknowledged apologies from Cllrs Michael Finnerty, Tom McNamara and Kevin McSheahan.

He welcomed New Forum Members:

Cllr Pat Burke, Clare County Council, replacing Joe Cooney,

Cllr Tony Mulqueen, Clare County Council, replacing Paul Murphy,

Cllr Paula McNamara, Roscommon County Council, replacing John Kelly, and

Cllr Tomas Mannion, Galway County Council, replacing Malachy Noone.

The Chairman also welcomed Ms Betty Holmes and representatives from the Donegal Action for Cancer Care group who requested to attend the meeting as observers.

352/35/11 Reports by Forum Committees

Members received copies of PCCC and Hospital Committee Minutes for the 3rd May 2011, recently approved at their respective of Forum Committees on the 6th and 13th September, 2011.

353/35/11 Questions

Questions and Responses Document is available on: http://www.hse.ie/eng/About/Who/Regional_Health_Forum_West

The following matters were raised by members:

W35Q793 – Cllr Catherine Connolly – Airgeal Phoil

Cllr Connolly further queried why beds vacated in Unit 9A MPH have not been filled.

Action: T Canavan will provide further details to Cllr Connolly and all Forum members.

W35Q800 – Cllr Mary Hoade – Senior Audiologist Post

Cllr Hoade further queried '*How much the HSE has spent to date on advertising for the vacant Senior Audiologist Post?*'

T Canavan outlined for the members the repeated efforts made to secure a candidate for this vacant post, including several Interview Processes. This post is proving extremely difficult to fill due to its speciality and more attractive positions in other locations in the country.

Action: T Canavan will provide further details in relation to costs to date on the filling of this Senior Audiologist Post and confirmation on how long this position has been vacant.

W35Q780 – Cllr B Meaney – Targets for Orchidopexy Treatment

Cllr Meaney queried the details of the response given in comparison to the HSE Corporate Plan 2008 – 2011 (HSE Healthstat/Dashboard).

Action: It was agreed that these figures would be clarified with Cllr Meaney, as soon as possible.

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/about/Who/corpopperf/report.pdf>

W35Q782 – Cllr B Meaney – Wait Time for Registration to Admission

Action: Response to this question will be circulated to Cllr Meaney, as soon as possible.

W35Q787 – Cllr J Scanlan – Nursing/Aid Staffing at St Ita's Hospital, Newcastle West

Action: It was agreed that details requested initially would be supplied to Cllr Scanlan, as soon as possible, i.e. 2009 figures and the difference in information supplied for Non Nursing Staff; 2010 was supplied in hours and 2011 was supplied in monetary value.

W35Q789 – Cllr D Bree – Breast Cancer Service, SGH

Cllr Bree expressed his disappointment with the response supplied and queried why NCCP representatives do not attend Forum meetings.

Action: J Hennessy agreed to invite NCCP representative(s) to the next Forum meeting and deal with this matter as an Agenda item.

W35Q790 – Cllr D Bree – Inpatient Treatment/Payment Details

Action: D McCallion agreed to provide further clarification to Cllr D Bree in relation to this query.

W35Q794 – Cllr C Connolly – Public Nursing Homes

Cllr Connolly highlighted that she did not request details on Private Nursing Homes, her question is not fully answered and there are contradictory figures provided in the two tables.

Action: It was agreed that further clarification will issue to Cllr Connolly.

W35Q798 – Cllr M Hoade – Waiting Times for Orthodontic Treatment

Cllr Hoade received correspondence previously stating the Orthodontic Treatment waiting lists took up to two years.

Action: It was agreed that further clarification will issue to Cllr Hoade.

W35Q799 – Cllr M Hoade – Tuam Ambulance Base

P O'Riordan confirmed that the response issued should have read as follows: *'Builders will be on site on the 3rd October with sufficient funding allocated for build and equipping allocated in 2011/2012. Estimated completion 9 months / 12 months.'*

It was agreed at this stage of the meeting, and in accordance with Standing Order 12.5 (c) to extend the meeting passed the normal 5.00pm finishing time, to deal with all items on the Agenda.

This matter was proposed by Cllr Declan Bree and seconded by Cllr Ciaran Brogan.

354/35/11 HSE West Financial Update

Mr Liam Minihan briefed Members on the HSE West Financial Position as at July 2011 - available on:

http://www.hse.ie/eng/About/Who/Regional_Health_Forum_West

Members raised the following queries/points:

- As the briefing relates to July 2011, is the current financial situation being tracked in live time? What does this tracking show; will HSE West breakeven?

- Why does Roscommon County Hospital appear to be overspent when throughput has now decreased?
- How much is currently being spent on Agency Staff? Where are these Agency staff being used?
- How will the HSE West prepare for increased activity during Winter Months?
- What is the current financial situation in relation to St John's Hospital, Limerick?
- Money is being taken from the Public Services and being used to pay off Banking Sector debts.
- Public Services are being replaced by Private Services.
- Managers could not possibly manage / balance the budgets they are tasked with.
- The only failure which can be ascribed to HSE West Management is that they did not succeed in retrieving the €18m not signed off by Consultants, for Private Patients. Public Patients are suffering as a result of this.
- What happens between now and December at Letterkenny General Hospital? How are patients going to be affected?
- It is cheaper to fund a private nursing home than a public nursing home.
- Public nursing homes provide more specialised and complex care to residents.
- Members should be briefed at local level on a regular basis / over the next few weeks.
- What are the HSE West going to do about the Consultants who have not signed off on the €18.8m from private health insurers, owed to the HSE? Do the HSE West know who these Consultants are?
- Why is there such a high rate of absenteeism in HSE West?
- Are services to those most vulnerable likely to be cut before the end of the year, e.g. Home Help?
- HSE is a conduit between Private Health Schemes and Public Services; HSE are providing a credit line for Private Health Insurers.
- Is there a profile of blackspots for illness, in the West?
- The HSE is not getting adequate funding – Management are finding it impossible to deliver services within their budgets. Government are choosing to pay of debts. Private Sector does not pay its way.
- How many agency staff have to be employed to cover those 1100 staff on sick leave, on any given day, in HSE West?
- What are the national averages for absenteeism?
- Will cashflow problems result in no pay for staff?

HSE Management advised as follows:

The 1100 absentees include voluntary and agency staff. Staff have statutory entitlements. Not all staff on sick leave are replaced; frontline replacements are a priority. A Programme to deal with absenteeism is underway.

Details on Agency Staff spend as at the end of July is as follows:

Medical	€9.3m
Nursing	€3.7m
Paramedic	€2m
All other grades	€4m*
Total	19m

*All other grades includes, Voluntary Agency Staff, Home Helps, etc.

The current financial situation is not dissimilar to this time last year. Finances are being tracked on a week to week basis. Control mechanisms are in place including, cost containment, ceasing overtime, controlling expenditure, bed management and income collection. Every manager's mandate is to breakeven, there is no alternative. HSE West is not playing with figures; 1bn was taken out of the Health Services in 2011, €120m of this from HSE West. There is a National Cash Management Plan / Contingency Plan to deal with any major

cashflow problems, should they arise. Collection of income, cessation of agency and reconfiguration of services will assist with achieving breakeven. The primary costs associated with Roscommon County Hospital, and any Hospital, relate to Pay. Overspend does not necessarily relate to activity.

Very few grades are currently exempted under the Moratorium.

In relation to Galway University Hospital management posts, this process is ongoing and details are with the Public Appointments Commission. HSE West hope to be in a position to provide more details on these appointments by the end of the week.

Action: J Hennessy will follow up with Cllr G McLoughlin in relation to St John's Hospital, Limerick.

Action: Members will be invited to attend local briefings to discuss their respective areas in more detail.

Action: A Profile will be provided to Cllr J Scanlan, copied to all Members, on data in relation to the spread of ill health in HSE West.

Action: Members will be provided with details on the successful candidates for the GUH management positions, as soon as possible.

355/35/11 Next Meeting of the Regional Health Forum West

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, 22nd November, 2011, commencing at 1.00pm in Room 1, Education Centre, Merlin Park, Galway.

The business of the New Committee will be dealt with as an Agenda item at the next Forum meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:

Cathaoirleach/Chairman

Adopted at Regional Health Forum Meeting on Tuesday 22nd November, 2011