

REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM

**Vice-Chairperson,
Cllr. Jim Daly**

Contact Details:
Regional Health Office – South,
Áras Sláinte,
Wilton Road,
Cork.

**Tel: (021) 4923603
Fax: (021) 4545748**

MINUTES - MEETING OF REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM SOUTH

**Thursday 10th May 2007 – 2.30pm
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNTY HALL, CORK**

Present:

Cllr. Michael Cahill	Cllr John Carey
Cllr. Joe Carroll	Cllr. Leo Carthy
Cllr. John Coonan	Cllr. Jim Daly, Vice-Chairperson
Cllr. Joe Donovan	Cllr. Anna Fenlon
Cllr. Toiréasa Ferris	Cllr. Marie Fitzpatrick
Cllr. Tom Fleming	Cllr. John Gilroy
Cllr. Des Hurley	Cllr. Rody Kelly
Cllr. Tim Lombard	Cllr. Ciarán Lynch, Chairperson
Cllr. Dr. Sean McCarthy	Cllr. Barbara Murray
Cllr. Paddy O'Callaghan	Cllr. Kevin O'Keeffe
Cllr. Pat O'Neill	Cllr. Mary Shields

Apologies:

Cllr. Jerry Buttimer	Cllr. Jimmy Curtis
Cllr. Tommy Kinsella	Cllr. Terry O'Brien
Cllr. Catherine Phelan	Cllr. Aileen Pyne
Cllr. Hilary Quinlan	Cllr. Seamus Ryan

In Attendance:

- Mr. Ger Crowley, Director, Regional Health Office South
- Mr. Richie Dooley, Hospital Network Manager, South Eastern Hospitals Group
- Mr. Pat Healy, Asst. National Director, PCCC South
- Ms. Debbie Keyes, Area Manager, Consumer Affairs, Dublin Mid-Leinster
- Dr. Elizabeth Keane, Director of Public Health
- Mr. Pat McCreanor, A/Chief Ambulance Officer
- Mr. Gerry O'Dwyer, Hospital Network Manager, Southern Hospitals Group
- Regional Health Office and Communications Support staff

1. Adoption of the Minutes of previous meeting held on Thursday 8th March 2007

On the proposal of Cllr. John Coonan, seconded by Cllr. Rody Kelly the minutes of the meeting of 8th March 2007 were adopted by the members and signed by the Chairperson.

2. Chairpersons Correspondence

- The Chair welcomed Cllr. Des Hurley from Carlow who took up his position as a new Forum member replacing the late Cllr. Michael Meaney (RIP).
- Members were informed that the presentation on Consumer Affairs would be made by Ms. Debbie Keyes, Area Manager, Dublin Mid-Leinster in lieu of Ms. Mary Culliton.
- Members were reminded to switch off mobile phones which interfere with the audio system in the chambers.
- The chair informed members that the deferred April Committee meetings will be re-scheduled and members will be informed of the new date by the Regional Health Office.
- The Chair outlined the running order of the meeting – Notices of Motion and Questions to be taken first to allow Managers involved in the INO/PNA dispute to leave early. He referred to correspondence that he had received on the Adoption/Fostering Service and filling of Social Worker Posts. It was agreed that a full report on the service will be brought to the next PCCC Committee meeting.
- Cllr. John Coonan brought to members attention and a discussion took place on the INO/PNA Nursing dispute with particular reference to the recent letter circulated to staff from the HSE regarding a 13.16% reduction in pay. At the proposal of Cllr. Coonan, seconded by Cllr. Rody Kelly, members agreed that the Chair would write to Prof. Brendan Drumm, CEO with a unanimous proposal calling on the HSE to:-
 - Withdraw the proposed reduction in nurses salaries
 - Enter into constructive negotiations with the unions, and to involve the Department of Health & Children and if necessary the Minister for Health & Children and the Taoiseach

Members expressed particular concern that patient safety and care would be the priority focus of all parties during the dispute.

3. HSE Updates

Presentation on Consumer Affairs from Ms. Debbie Keyes, Area Manager, Dublin Mid-Leinster

Ms. Debbie Keyes introduced herself to members and outlined her role and that of the Consumer Affairs Office within the HSE. She explained that the Head of Consumer Affairs, Ms. Mary Culliton, was appointed from May 2006 and how the office complements the work of the other service directorates and engages with the Office of the Ombudsman and Ombudsman for Children, the Data Commissioner and Information Commissioner. The functions of the Office of Consumer Affairs include the management of complaints and incidents, working with Quality and Risk to ensure learning from these, and developing systems to enable the inclusion of patients and service users. She explained that both the service provider and the service user have an equal voice and are of equal importance in both the planning of services and the resolution of complaints.

Ms. Keyes summarised the different legislation which informs the office's work: -

- Data Protection Act
- Freedom of Information Act

- Health Act 2004
 - Part 8: public representation and user participation
 - Part 9: complaints

She explained that the Consumer Affairs office participated widely in a consultation process in the development of "Policies and Procedures for the Management of Complaints (05/06)". Examples of consumer participation approaches in the South and nationally were outlined including consumer panels, consultative workshops, the accreditation process in hospitals, Consumer Surveys of the Patients Experience, the HSE's Comments and Complaints Policy and the establishment of a Forum for Older People's Residential Care. Members thanked Ms. Keyes for her presentation and raised a number of queries. It was agreed to circulate to all members a copy of a report of a National Survey among people who attended Emergency Departments during 2006.

In conclusion, the Chairperson thanked Ms. Keyes for her informative presentation.

4. Committee Meetings

Meetings due to be held on 12th April 2007 were deferred due to Manager unavailability because of the nursing dispute. When a further date for the meetings is decided on, members will be informed by the Regional Health Office.

5. Notice of Motion

5 (a) Cllr. Ciarán Lynch moved the following Notice of Motion standing in his name: -

"To ask the Regional Health Forum South to support a request to the Minister/Department of Health and Children asking that a decision be made on the future location of an extended, comprehensive and co-ordinated national medical rehabilitation service to provide for the needs of the under 65 age group including those living within the HSE South. Rehabilitation services in Ireland require expansion using a co-ordinated multi-disciplinary team based approach to promote independence, a return to work and improved life for those affected by brain injury, stroke, MS and other similar diseases and to provide support to their families/carers."

A joint report on the matter was provided by Mr. Pat Healy, Mr. Gerry O'Dwyer and Mr. Richie Dooley.

Mr. Healy summarised the report for members and explained that there is a recognised need to provide access to a comprehensive and integrated Rehabilitation Service for the population of the HSE South. He outlined the development proposals put forward by the former South and South Eastern Health Boards, both of which were submitted to the Department of Health and Children as part of the Department's overall Strategy and Action Plan for the development of the National Rehabilitation Hospital which will – inter alia – increase the number of beds and staff available at the hospital at a cost of €180m. Mr. Healy explained that the next stage in 2007 will involve the development of plans at regional level including the South and the above mentioned documents along with this Notice of Motion from the Forum, will support the HSE's work in further developing the rehabilitation service.

5 (b) Cllr. Mary Shields moved the following Notice of Motion standing in her name: -

"That the HSE South would put appropriate measures in place without delay to upgrade and improve the appearance of GF Ward at Cork University Hospital. This area of the hospital seems to be lacking in an acceptable standard of cleanliness and brightness compared to the rest of the hospital. The whole perimeter of the Department is depressingly neglected including the gardens which for a long time now are full of large high heaps of builder's rubble and earth. The whole building both inside and outside badly needs upgrading and some bright painting would go a long way to improving the ambience of the place both for staff and patient, also provision of a lift within the building for the use of staff and to transfer infirm patients from one floor to another"

A report on the matter was provided by Mr. Pat Healy, Asst. National Director, PCCC.

Mr. Healy summarised the report for members and explained that the HSE had set up a group to progress the redesign and refurbishment of Ward GF. The report of this group is being considered and a brief will be put forward for consideration in 2008 as part of the annual review of the rolling Capital Plan. In the interim, substantial minor capital funding has been provided for the refurbishment of the Unit.

5 (c) Cllr. Toiréasa Ferris moved the following Notice of Motion standing in her name: -

"That the HSE South would do its utmost to ensure that a well-established policy in other counties of dual callouts will begin to operate in the case of RTA's in Co. Kerry"

A report on the matter was provided by Mr. Pat McCreanor, A/Chief Ambulance Officer who explained the Standard Operating Procedures for call taking and activation of Ambulance responses in the Command and Control Centres in Cork and Kerry. Information is elicited from callers to the Centres and if someone involved in an RTA is trapped within the vehicle, the Fire Brigade Service is alerted. The service is not called on all occasions. Mr. McCreanor took the opportunity to pay tribute to the invaluable assistance provided to the HSE by the Fire Service.

In response to further queries from members, Mr. McCreanor agreed to take up the dual call-out issue on a local and national basis. In response to the Chair's query on the monitoring of call-out times, it was agreed that a report on the matter would be circulated to members via the Regional Health Office.

5 (d) The following Notice of Motion was placed on the agenda by Cllr. Jerry Buttimer: -

"That the HSE South would debate the provision of Paediatric Services in Cork and to outline if there are any plans for a dedicated Paediatric Hospital in Cork"

A joint report on the matter was compiled by Mr. Gerry O'Dwyer and Mr. Pat Healy. In the absence of Cllr. Buttimer from the meeting, the response was forwarded on to him for consideration.

5 (e) Cllr. Michael Cahill moved the following Notice of Motion standing in his name:

"That the HSE south implement the Comhairle na nOspideál report in relation to Rheumatology Services in Kerry as a matter of urgency"

A report on the matter was provided by Mr. Gerry O'Dwyer who synthesised its contents for members. He explained that, at present, a visiting Consultant Rheumatologist provides a service

to the Hospital one day per month. If patients require further treatment, they are referred on to the Rheumatology Service at CUH. Mr. O'Dwyer outlined that the HSE has set up a working group on services for people with arthritis and other related rheumatological conditions and this group is currently preparing an interim report which will inform the Estimates process 2008. The Southern Hospitals group submission under the 2007 Estimates process included a post of Consultant Rheumatologist. However, to date no additional funding to facilitate this appointment has been allocated. In response to Cllr. Cahill's request that the HSE consider the Motion from the Forum, Mr. O'Dwyer explained that the implementation of the Report of Comhairle na nOspideál on Rheumatology remains a priority for the HSE.

5 (f) Cllr. Tim Lombard moved the following Notice of Motion standing in his name: -

"To request that the HSE secure the requested number of Consultants to enable the Cork University Maternity Hospital achieve its flagged status as a world centre of excellence"

Also, could the Network Manager explain:

- (a) Why is the home from home room on the delivery suite being utilised for women in actively managed labour?**
- (b) What is the current situation in relation to the commitments given regarding midwifery staffing levels?**

A written report on the matter was provided by Mr. Gerry O'Dwyer, Network Manager who explained that the CUMH has been functioning well since its opening with 675 births taking place in April. The full bed complement will be opened on a phased basis and an on-going recruitment campaign is taking place to recruit the remainder of the Midwifery and other staff required. The filling of the remainder of the Consultant medical posts will be progressed when the national Consultant Contract negotiations conclude.

It was agreed that a full update report on CUMH will be brought to the next meeting of the Acute/Population Health committee.

6. Questions

6 (a) Cllr. Mary Shields put forward the following question: -

"Now that the state of the Art World-Class University Maternity Hospital is opened, when can we expect the perimeter railings will be painted to complement this?"

They are in shocking condition and my concern is that they will be completely corroded with rust if the work is delayed any longer.

Mr. Gerry O'Dwyer provided a written response to Cllr. Shield's query and summarised same for members. He explained that the replacement of the railings should be completed shortly and in response to a request from Cllr. Shields, he agreed to forward on to her the replacement costs.

6 (b) Cllr. Toiréasa Ferris put forward the following question: -

"Will the HSE work towards ensuring patients with private health insurance do not continue to pay the cost of overcrowding in our hospitals?"

A joint response to the query was provided by Mr. Richie Dooley and Mr. Gerry O'Dwyer who agreed to follow up directly on an individual case query that Cllr. Ferris passed to him.

6 (c) The following question was put forward on the agenda by Cllr. Jerry Buttimer: -

"To ask for a breakdown of figures in the number of private and public patients going forward for general surgery in Operating Theatres in the HSE Hospitals in Cork"

In the absence of Cllr. Buttimer and following contact with him, it was agreed that the answer to the question would be forwarded on to him by the Regional Health Office.

6 (d) Cllr. Tim Lombard put forward the following question: -

"What is the latest update regarding the proposed new health centre in Carrigaline?"

A written response was provided by Mr. Pat Healy who provided further clarification on the services to be provided on the Health Centre site.

6 (e) Cllr. Ciarán Lynch put forward the following question: -

"In relation to the Rent Allowance Scheme operated by the HSE:

- **How much does the HSE annually provide in rent allowance to the private rental housing sector nationally and also the extent of the sum in the Southern Region?**
- **What plans are intended for the future delivery of this service and do these plans involve either a cross-departmental approach or a complete transfer to another government policy?**
- **What measures at present are in place in the Rent Allowance Scheme for the monitoring and dealing with of anti-social behaviour by tenants and landlord management of their property?**
- **In the event of any changes to the existing Scheme, will measures be examined and implemented for the monitoring and dealing with of anti-social behaviour by tenants and landlord management of their property?"**

Mr. Pat Healy provided a comprehensive written response to Cllr. Lynch's query and summarised same for members. He clarified that the national figures provided on rent supplements for the HSE are for 2005 as the 2006 position is not finalised as yet and the South figures in the report are in respect of 2005 and provisional figures for 2006. Mr. Healy gave the background on the Rent Supplement Scheme and a new interdepartmental initiative – the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) – which is being introduced to cater for the accommodation needs of those in receipt of rent supplement for more than 18 months. He explained that, over the years, the housing needs of applicants have not been met by the Local Authorities and rent supplement is augmenting this. A lengthy discussion followed on this and the need to tackle anti-social behaviour. Cllr. Ferris made the point that landlords of private rented accommodation should take responsibility for the behaviour of their tenants and this should not fall under the remit of the HSE/healthcare services. Mr. Healy took on board members concerns and asked that they take up the matter of housing needs with their respective local authorities.

6 (f) Cllr. Rody Kelly put forward the following question: -

“What are the HSE South’s plans for the continuing and future use of St. Dymphna’s Hospital in Carlow, and does St. Dymphna’s offer any possibilities for the provision of more step-down beds in Carlow?”

Mr. Pat Healy provided a written report and summarised the Mental Health, Acute and PCCC services provided on the campus at St. Dymphna’s. He explained that a development control plan is being drawn up for the site and should be finalised shortly. With reference to the provision of stepdown beds, he explained that the HSE’s priority for the area at this time is for dementia beds and the control plan provides for 20 additional such beds. Mr. Healy acknowledged that, into the future, there may be a need for further stepdown beds but the main priority at present is to provide greater supports to low and medium dependency patients to enable them to remain at home for as long as possible.

Any Other Business:-

Members raised queries on the following which were responded to by the relevant Manager or direct response to follow to members: -

- Extension to Kenmare Community Hospital
- Adoption Services
- Update on TB/BCG Vaccination
- Orthodontic Services, Kerry
- Dental check ups – Kerry
- Speech & Language Therapy waiting lists for children with Disabilities
- Respite care for children with Disabilities attending mainstream school.

It was agreed that Mr. Ger Reaney, Local Health Manager would give a presentation to members on Disability Services at the next meeting of the Forum.

7. Date and Time of next Meeting

Thursday 14th June 2007 at 2.30pm, Council Chambers, County Hall, Cork.