

REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM - DUBLIN NORTH EAST

FÓRAM RÉIGIÚNACH SLÁINTE - BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH AGUS AN TÓIRTHUAISCEART

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 26TH MAY, 2008 AT 2:00PM

IN THE FORUM MEETING ROOM, HSE, DUBLIN ROAD, KELLS

Members Present:

Cllr. Charlie Boylan
Cllr. Christy Burke
Cllr. Ciaran Byrne
Cllr. Anne Carter
Cllr. Ann Dillon-Gallagher
Cllr. Dessie Ellis

Cllr. Hugh McElvaney
Cllr. Brian McKenna
Cllr. May McKeon
Cllr. Pdraig McNally
Cllr. Gerry Murray
Cllr. Patrick O'Reilly

Cllr. Joe Reilly
Cllr. Tommy Reilly
Cllr. Tomás Sharkey
Cllr. Tom Stafford
Cllr. Bill Tormey

Not in Attendance:

Cllr. Declan Breathnach
Cllr. Terry Brennan
Cllr. Eugene Cassidy
Cllr. Joe Corr

Cllr. Alan Farrell
Cllr. Deirdre Heney
Cllr. Gerry McGuire
Cllr. Seamus Murray

Cllr. Eoghan O'Brien
Cllr. Aodhán Ó Riordáin
Cllr. Mary O'Shea

Apologies:

Cllr. Frank Maher

Officials Present:

Mr. Ray Mitchell, Director, Regional Health Office – Dublin North East.
Mr. Tadhg O'Brien, Assistant National Director – PCCC – Dublin North East.
Mr. Stephen Mulvany, Hospital Network Manager – North East.
Ms. Angela Fitzgerald, Hospital Network Manager – North Dublin.
Ms. Rosaleen Harlin, Area Communications Manager - Dublin North East.
Ms. Janet Malone, Specialist, Mental Health, Dublin North East.
Ms. Ethna McQuillan, Senior Manager, Regional Health Office - Dublin North East.
Ms. Rosaleen Harlin, Area Communications Manager – Dublin North East.
Ms. Katherine Murphy, Regional Health Office – Dublin North East.
Ms. Lorraine Timmons, Regional Health Office - Dublin North East.

The Chairperson, Cllr. Gerry Murray, opened the meeting by welcoming all the members to the fourteenth meeting of the Regional Health Forum – Dublin North East.

1. Adoption of minutes of meeting held on Monday, 31st March, 2008.

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 31st March, 2008 were adopted by the Forum on the proposal of Cllr. Bill Tormey and seconded by Cllr. Brian McKenna.

2. Presentation on Mental Health ‘A Vision for Change’

Ms. Janet Malone, Specialist, Mental Health - Dublin North East made a presentation to members on Mental Health ‘A Vision for Change’ (copy appended to the official minute).

Members thanked Ms. Malone for her presentation and a discussion took place where members raised the following issues:-

- Concerns in relation to the availability of mental health services over the weekend and out-of-hours periods;
- Concerns in relation enlarging the catchment areas;
- Further clarification in relation to closure plans for existing psychiatric hospitals;
- Request that funds made available from the closure of existing psychiatric hospitals be allocated back into mental health services;
- Request for alcohol unit to be provided in the North East;
- Clarification as to whether laws in relation to placing relatives in psychiatric institutions have been examined;
- Request for list of psychiatric institutions in Dublin North East to include areas covered, illnesses, connections to other services, etc.;
- Request for further details on mental health services available to children and adolescents;
- Stigma associated with mental health;
- Need for greater training in the area of mental health;
- Clarification in relation to autism services;
- Request for future presentation on suicide prevention.

Ms. Malone responded to the questions and comments from the members as follows:-

- The first point of contact for anyone experiencing mental health difficulties is their GP. Up to 90% of people with mental health difficulties are managed in primary care with only 10% of people requiring referral to specialist secondary care services. There are arrangements in place which enable GPs to access to emergency mental health services on a 24/7 basis;
- Evidence has shown that service users wish to have services provided as locally as possible. As far as possible, mental health catchment areas will be aligned with health and social care networks and where possible it is hoped that Primary Care Teams and Community Mental Health Teams can be co-located. However, for certain specialist services a larger catchment area will be required;
- It is planned that an appropriate alternative community based service will be in place prior to the closure of any existing psychiatric hospitals;
- It is also envisaged that funding from the sale of land/property previously used for mental health services will be reinvested in mental health and that staffing from these units be redeployed elsewhere in the mental health service;
- The provision of services for people with alcohol and drug addiction is complex. Under the Mental Health Act 2001, a person with a sole diagnosis of alcoholism can not be admitted involuntarily to an Approved Centre. However, it is acknowledged that these individuals are more likely to experience a wide range of mental health issues;

- Part 2 of the Mental Health Act, 2001, which was implemented on 1st November, 2006, provides clear protections for the human rights for persons admitted involuntarily. Under the Act, all involuntary admissions are automatically reviewed by an independent tribunal within 21 days of admission. Tribunals are conducted under the auspices of the Mental Health Commission;
- Details of psychiatric hospitals in Dublin North East to be forwarded to North East councillors;
- Details of mental health services available to children and adolescents to be forwarded to members;
- The secondary school curriculum provides a Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme, which among other things, deals with issues such as maintaining positive mental health, stigma etc.;
- It is acknowledged that there is a need for greater training in mental health and work is on-going in this area to identify the necessary training requirements appropriate to a modern mental health service;
- While Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services may be involved in the assessment and diagnosis of autism, service provision for autism comes under disability services;
- It was suggested that perhaps Mr. Geoff Day, Head of the National Office for Suicide Prevention could be invited to deliver a presentation on suicide prevention at a future meeting.

3. Regional Health Forum Annual Report 2007

The report was noted by the Forum.

4. Motions

There was no business under this item.

5. Questions

The responses to questions submitted for the meeting were circulated.

6. Health Service Executive Updates.

Mr. Ray Mitchell, Director of the Regional Health Office gave a report to the meeting which dealt with the following:-

- Look-back review of x-rays and CT scans at Louth/Meath hospitals;
- Official opening of Geraldstown Complex, Ballymun, Dublin 11;
- Cavan Monaghan Joint Department of Surgery;
- National Audit of Stroke Care;
- HSE publishes detailed review of alcohol consumption rates and related harms;
- New GAA Alcohol and Substance Prevention resources for clubs;
- Launch of new resources to improve outcomes for children and young people across the island of Ireland;
- The Centre for Ageing Research in Ireland (CARDI);
- Baby Friendly award for Cavan General Hospital;
- Hospital Administrator, Our Lady's Hospital, Navan.

Members raised a number of queries and concerns in relation to the look-back review of x-rays and CT scans at Louth/Meath Hospitals as follows:-

- Disappointment that further information was not issued since the last Forum meeting in March;
- Request for details in relation to the following:-
 - Who made the decision in relation to proceeding with a review;
 - Why this decision was made;
 - Who are the medical professionals being consulted;
 - Request for details of any written reports or correspondence on the matter;
 - Details of the numbers of fake positive and fake negative rates on the chest x-ray results and details of the rate re radiology versus wards;
 - What is the response of Executive in relation to the concerns of the public;
 - Request for a full report to Forum.

Mr. Mr. Ray Mitchell, Director responded to the questions and comments from the members as follows:-

- Press Releases were issued on 16th May, 2008 outlining the background to the review, steps being taken at present and a ‘questions and answers’ section. Due to unavailability of senior management for the April Committee meetings a decision was taken to postpone the meetings, in consultations with both Committee Chairpersons, and therefore there has not been an opportunity for open discussion with Forum member on the matter;
- Response to be issued to all members in relation to questions detailed.

Members also raised a number of other comments and queries as follows:-

- Recent media coverage concerning the resignation of two Forum members;
- Clarification in relation to speculation that the Medical Assessment Unit (MAU) at Our Lady’s Hospital, Navan will now not be opening due to a lack of resources;
- Concerns that other sections of Our Lady’s Hospital, Navan will suffer due to resources being freed up to open the MAU;
- Request for details in relation to the following:-
 - Proposed funding for the MAU;
 - Proposed staffing level of the MAU;
 - Details of proposed transfers, duties, consequences involved;
 - If proposal is likely to be successful without interfering with patient care facilities at the hospital;
- Inefficiencies in the health services in the North East with particular regard to occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech and language therapy;
- Need for greater co-operation and communication between Forum and Executive;
- Request for future presentation on the ‘National Audit of Stroke Units’
- Request for future presentation on ‘Alcohol Related Harm in Ireland’;
- Request for details of criteria involved in selection of stroke units;
- Request for details on cost effectiveness of Smithfield Clinic;
- Request for update in relation to Primary Care Unit, Balbriggan;
- Poor attendance of some Forum members at both Forum and Committee meetings;

Senior management present responded to the comments and queries from the members as follows:-

- Neither the Chairperson nor the Executive has received any correspondence so far in relation to resignations and as a result the matter can not be discussed;

- Speculation in relation to the opening of the MAU is incorrect. The unit remains a priority for the current year and is expected to open in September/October with the implementation of freeing up resources within the hospital;
- It has been made clear that no specific additional resources are being made available for the opening of the MAU. Therefore, the only option available is to use existing resources at the hospital. However, innovation funding of €12 million has been secured by the HSE, some of which will be ring-fenced to support the implementation of the unit. It is important to note however that the MAU will relieve the pressure on the Accident and Emergency department and also on beds;
- Report to be prepared outlining issues concerning funding, staffing, etc. for the MAU;
- Presentation on therapies to be arranged for next Primary, Community and Continuing Care Committee meeting;
- Agreement with comments in relation for the need for greater co-operation and communication between Forum and Executive;
- Presentation on the 'National Audit of Stroke Units' to be prepared for future meeting;
- Presentation on 'Alcohol Related Harm in Ireland' to be prepared for future meeting;
- Details of selection criteria involved for stroke units to be provided to member;
- Details on cost effectiveness of Smithfield Clinic to be provided to member;
- Update in relation to Primary Care Unit, Balbriggan to be forwarded to member;
- Issue of attendance to be examined by Chairperson and Director.

The Updates were noted by the Forum.

7. Chairperson's Correspondence.

There was no business under this item.

8. Date and time of next meeting.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Regional Health Forum – Dublin North East would be held on Monday, 28th July, 2008 at 2:00pm.

It was also noted that the Committee meetings which were postponed in April will now take place on Monday 8th December, 2008.

Signed:

Cllr. Gerry Murray,
Chairperson,
Regional Health Forum – Dublin North East.