Introduction into the National Acute Medicine Programme in Ireland

The National Acute Medicine Programme (NAMP) is a clinician led initiative that was launched in December 2010 between the Health Service Executive’s (HSE), the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI), the Irish Association of Directors of Nursing and Midwifery (IADNAM), Health and Social Care Professionals and the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP).

The programme recognises the essential role of large and small hospitals, general practitioners (GPs) and community services. It provides a framework for the delivery of acute medical services which seeks to substantially improve patient care.

The programme is currently under the joint leadership of Prof Garry Courtney and Dr Yvonne Smyth.

Meet the Team

Prof Garry Courtney graduated in Medicine from Trinity College, Dublin University, trained in General Medicine and Gastroenterology in Dublin and London and was appointed a Consultant Physician and Gastroenterologist in St. Luke’s Hospital, Kilkenny in 1996. He is a member of the Executive of the Ireland East Hospital Group. Other appointments include Associate Professor of Medicine at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and College Tutor at the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. He was a member of the working group which established Clinical Directorates in 2008 and is the Clinical Director in St. Luke’s Hospital, Kilkenny. Clinical Interests include Acute Medicine, Viral Hepatitis, Interventional Endoscopy and Inflammatory Bowel Disease. Prof Courtney has been the Clinical Lead of the Acute Medicine Programme since 2010.

Dr. Yvonne Smyth, Clinical Co-lead joined the programme in December 2015. She graduated from NUIG in 1997 and trained in University College Hospital Galway (UCHG). Thereafter she worked in Beaumont, Tallaght and Cork University Hospitals before returning to Galway to complete the Cardiology Specialist Registrar Training Programme in both Cardiology and General Internal Medicine in 2007. Her particular areas of interest are cardiovascular imaging and heart failure. Dr Smyth undertook a subspecialty fellowship in the Cleveland Clinic USA prior to being appointed as a Consultant Cardiologist in Bon Secours Hospital and Kerry General Hospitals Tralee in 2008. She took up joint Cardiology/ AMU post in Galway University Hospital in 2012 and was appointed as the Acute Medicine Lead for the Saolta Hospital Group in 2015. She has a MA in Healthcare Management, a Diploma in Clinical Education, is a fellow of the RCPI and an ACLS instructor.

Other members of the clinical programme include; Mr Richard Walsh (Director of Nursing Lead), Mr Paul Nolan (Health and Social Care Professional Lead) and Ms Gemma Leacy (Project Coordinator).

The Acute Medicine Programme has achieved so much since being established in late 2010, such as introducing the National Early Warning Score (NEWS), the COMPASS elearning programme and establishing Acute Medical Assessment Units (AMAUs) and Medical Assessment Units (MAU’s), (33 AMAUs/MAUs nationally), which brought about a significant reduction in the AvLoS for medical patients in 33 Acute Hospitals currently implementing NAMP model. The programme designated hospitals into Model 1,2,3 and 4 Hospitals and mandated GP/Hospital liaison committees in all acute hospitals.

Over the next few months, we will be giving you an insight into some of projects the team are working on within the programme such as; the implementation of NQAIS Clinical, patient experience times in AMAUs in Ireland, Health and Social Care Professionals role in the delivery of Acute Medicine, the nursing role within AMAUs and the Irish Society of Acute and Internal Medicine. The NAMP team have visited many acute medicine facilities across the U.K. and have drawn inspiration from SAM (The Society of Acute of Medicine) which has provided sound practical advice to our fledging sister society ISAIM (The Society of Acute and Internal Medicine).