MINUTES - MEETING OF REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM SOUTH

Thursday 11th February, 2010 @ 2.00pm
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNTY HALL, CORK

Present:

Cllr. Liam Ahearn  Cllr. Pat Burton
Cllr. John Buttimer  Cllr. John Carey
Cllr. Catherine Clancy  Cllr. Pat Cody
Cllr. Timmy Collins  Cllr. John Coonan
Cllr. Tom Cronin  Cllr. Wayne Fennell
Cllr. Brendan Griffin  Cllr. Mary Hanna Hourigan
Cllr. Michael Healy-Rae  Cllr. Michael Hegarty
Cllr. Denis Kennedy  Cllr. Tim Lombard
Cllr. Sean Lonergan  Cllr. Tom Maher, Chairperson
Cllr. Marie Moloney  Cllr. Martin Murphy
Cllr. Barbara Murray  Cllr. Dr. Sean McCarthy
Cllr. Bobby O’Connell  Cllr. Frank O’Flynn
Cllr. Laurence O’Neill  Cllr. Pat O’Neill
Cllr. John O’Sullivan  Cllr. Hilary Quinlan
Cllr. Seamus Ryan  Cllr. Jim Townsend

Apologies:

Cllr. Danny Crowley  Cllr. Declan Doocey
Cllr. Anna Fenlon  Cllr. Terry O’Brien
Cllr. Mary Shields

In Attendance:

- Mr. Pat Healy, Regional Director of Operations - South
- Mr. Ger Crowley, Director, Regional Health Office – South
- Mr. Richie Dooley, Network Manager South Eastern Hospitals Group
- Ms. Christine Eckersley, Area Communications Manager, HSE South
- Dr. Elizabeth Keane, Director of Public Health, HSE South,
- Ms. Anna-Marie Lanigan, Interim Assistant National Director, HSE South
- Mr. Barry O’Brien, Assistant National Director of Human Resources, South
- Ms. Raymonde O’Sullivan, Assistant National Director of Finance, South
- Mr. Ger Reaney, Interim Network Manager, Southern Hospitals Group
- Ms. Elaine O’Mahony, Administrative Manager, Regional Health Office South
- Regional Health Office and Communications Support staff
1. **Adoption of the minutes of meeting held on 5th November 2009**

At the proposal of Cllr. Michael Healy-Rae, seconded by Cllr. Laurence (Cha) O’Neill, the minutes of the meeting of 5th November were approved and adopted by members.

2. **Chairperson’s Correspondence**

Cllr. Tom Maher, Chairperson welcomed all Members and Managers and explained that the date of the meeting had been re-scheduled to facilitate the making of a presentation to members on the HSE South’s implementation of the National Service Plan 2010. He reminded members that a link to the Service Plan had been forwarded soon after its release on the previous Monday and that today a hard copy was circulated along with a copy of the HSE South’s: Implementation of the National Service Plan 2010.

The Chair informed members that local Forum briefings will be set up within each area over the next number of weeks so that members can meet their Local Health Manager and Hospital Manager to discuss issues of local interest.

Members were reminded that a revised list of dates of meetings for the reminder of 2010 has been circulated to them via hard copy and email.

3. **HSE Updates**

**Update report on Influenza A(H1N1)**

Dr Elizabeth Keane, Director of Public Health gave an update report on Infuenza A (H1N1) (Swine Flu) explaining that all influenza activity has reduced at present but it is unknown as to whether a further “wave” will hit Ireland. She emphasised the need for people to be vaccinated to ensure “herd immunity” within the population and outlined the two different vaccines that are available. She refuted the suggestion that there was over-reaction to the threat of a pandemic and explained that governments were guided by the World Health Organisation (WHO) who provide independent advice and are not influenced by commercial companies.

**Presentation and report from HSE Management on Service Plan 2010**

Mr. Pat Healy, Regional Director of Operations opened the presentation by introducing the Management Team and explaining that the 2010 Service Plan incorporates the HSE’s Corporate Business Plan, Government priorities and all relevant national strategies. He outlined the key risks involved in implementing this year’s National plan. He also advised that a document was circulated to members which set out how the HSE South will implement the National Service Plan and work towards achieving the targets and deliverables set out in the National Plan, working within the approved employment ceiling and meeting quality and safety standards whilst remaining within Budget.

Mr. Healy explained that development of primary care services continues to be the key priority for HSE South and is a cornerstone of the Transformation programme with the shift in provision of care from acute and institutional settings to services within people’s community. He made reference to the 2010 priorities of:

- Further development of Primary Care Teams/Social Care Networks
- Reconfiguration of mental health services to focus on the treatment of patients in community settings
- Improving access and responding to needs in Child Care, Disability, Mental Health and Social Inclusion services
- Expansion of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Teams
- Major Programme of provision on long stay beds for older people together with the implementation of a new model of care
- Hospital reconfiguration by e.g. reducing inpatient admissions, and increasing day case procedures
- and same day admission for surgery
- Increasing access to diagnostic services and improved discharge planning
- Addressing Emergency Department issues and the establishment of Medical Assessment Units
- Greater integration across hospital and community services
- Further local implementation of the National Cancer Control Programme
- Reconfiguration Programme plans for South West and South East Programme

Mr. Healy explained that Dr. Barry White has taken up duty as the National Director for Quality and Clinical Care and that HSE South will be working with his Directorate to introduce a programmatic approach across HSE South for certain chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart failure, stroke as well as introducing a national standardised approach to acute medicine.

**Briefing from Ms Anna-Marie Lanigan, Interim AND, PCCC**

Ms. Anna-Marie Lanigan updated members on the position regarding Primary Care Teams in the South explaining that 63 teams are up and running with 43 additional teams targeted for 2010. She outlined some of the work undertaken by these Teams and their goals as they further develop services for patients within their communities e.g.

- Illness prevention and health promotion
- Chronic disease management for asthma, C.O.P.D. etc.
- Enhanced multi-disciplinary working
- Integration between community and hospital services

She outlined the community services that are to be advanced in 2010 e.g.

- G.P. Training Scheme
- Implementation of the recommendations of the national review of GP out of hours services such as Care Doc and South Doc
- Appointment of two community-based Geriatricians in Kerry
- Additional funding for the Nursing Homes Support Scheme (Fair Deal)
- Development of infrastructure for Primary Care Centres via PPPs

And that the existing level of service following will be continued for older people:

- Home Help service
- Home Care Packages (with additional national development funding of €2 m)
- Day care places
- Residential Care beds (304 new and 299 replacement beds will be commissioned in 2010)

Ms. Lanigan made reference to the challenge of meeting timelines in the Disability Act and the efforts that will be made in 2010 to adhere to time frames. Funding will be provided for additional emergency placements and greater efficiencies will be achieved in the provision of disability services such as transport and administration costs.

In Mental Health, reconfiguration of services will continue in 2010 with the development of community-based teams and a focus on delivering services closer to the patient via Primary Care Teams. Further assessment of the needs of clients in long-stay care will continue to ensure their transfer to more appropriate care settings. 4 Executive Clinical Directors have been appointed to Mental Health from the existing complement of staff to provide strategic direction for the service within expanded catchment areas. In Child and Adolescent mental health, 8 in-patient beds have been provided in an interim unit at St. Stephen’s Hospital with the 20 bedded in-patient unit at Bessboro, Cork to be completed in 2010. Further information on the local reconfiguration of mental health services will be made available at the local area Forum briefings.

Members were updated on plans for Addiction, Traveller Health & services for Children & Families with €1m nationally being provided for the development of a national IT system for
child welfare and protection and €15m nationally for Children and Families under the Ryan Report to provide for 200 additional social workers the actions from which will be implemented in 2010.

**Briefing from Mr. Richie Dooley, Hospital Network Manager, South Eastern Hospital Group**

Mr. Richard Dooley outlined for members the key acute hospital priorities in the HSE Service Plan e.g.

- More pre-op assessment and same day of surgery admission
- Increased day surgery
- Reduction in emergency admissions with further development of Medical Assessment Units
- Increased access to diagnostic services e.g. x-ray
- Reduction in length of stay
- Protection of elective beds
- Reduction in OPD waiting times
- Ensuring urgent colonoscopy procedures are performed within a 4 week timeframe

He explained that work has taken place on formulating key performance targets, with monthly reporting, to ensure targets are met. Clinical Directors have been appointed to the hospitals within the South East and the development of their role and that of clinical leadership will be crucial to the success of hospital reconfiguration. The focus of the 2010 plan is to continue Transformation, integration of hospital and community services, to reduce dependency on acute services and to further the development of Primary Care Teams.

Mr. Dooley went through the challenges that are anticipated in 2010 in delivering on the Service plan and the cost reduction and containment plans that will be progressed to ensure adherence to the local business plans. He went through the service enhancement initiatives that will proceed in the South East. e.g.

**Waterford Regional Hospital**
- Extension of hours of Cath. Laboratory
- Emergency Department expansion and Special Care Baby Unit/Intensive care unit to commence construction this year
- Establishment of rapid access Lung and Prostate clinics in conjunction with NCCP

**Wexford General Hospital**
- Stage 2 Design of Emergency Department and Maternity Services project to be completed.
- Provision of on-site pre-assessment unit for early pregnancy

**St. Luke’s, Kilkenny/Kilcreene Orthopaedic Hospital**
- Stage 2 design completion for Phase 1 Capital Development
- Plan for provision of Hospice/Palliative Care Unit
- Continue to increase elective Orthopaedic day case procedures

**South Tipperary General Hospital**
- Further roll-out of OPD Lean Project (members received a presentation on this initiative at committee meeting)
- Extension of hours of opening of Medical Assessment Unit to 5 days per week.

**Briefing from Mr. Ger Reaney, Interim Hospital Network Manager, Southern Hospitals Group**

Mr. Ger Reaney introduced his presentation and explained that the key challenges facing the Southern Hospitals Group are similar to those of the hospitals in the South East and the priorities in 2010 are as outlined in the National plan:-

- reducing pressure in Emergency Departments and reduction in emergency admissions
- the establishment of Medical Assessment Units, greater access to diagnostic services and to senior decision makers
- reduction in length of stay and greater usage of Day Case procedures

Mr. Reaney explained that each of the hospitals as follows, within his group:
- Cork University Hospital
- Kerry General Hospital
- South Infirmary Victoria/University Hospital
- Mercy University Hospital
- Bantry General Hospital
- Mallow General Hospital

will look at efficiencies to ensure that they are able to continue to deliver front-line services within a challenging environment of reduced funding and the need to remain within their Whole-Time Equivalent (WTE) ceiling. The following will be progressed:
- Drug utilisation will be looked at for VFM
- Absenteeism will be closely monitored
- Income generation will be maximised
- All pay and non-pay expenditure will be examined in detail
- Seasonal closures and theatre utilisation will be maximised

Members were informed that hospitals in the South West will commence reconfiguration this year, following the release of an overall plan and roadmap by the Reconfiguration Team.

In conclusion, Mr. Reaney thanked all managers and staff within the hospitals for their dedication and commitment to providing a quality service within present constraints.

**Question and Answer session**
The Chairperson and members thanked Managers for their individual presentation which were followed by a Question and Answer session with the following queries and comments responded to:

- Difference between a Primary Care Team and a Primary Care Centre and update given on Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the development of Centres
- Appointment of 4 Clinical Directors to Mental Health Service from within existing resources
- Palliative Care Team at St Luke’s
- Comparative budget/WTE figures against previous years
- St. Patrick’s Hospital, Waterford/proposal for C.N.U. and engagement with Local Authority
- Residential beds for Disability Services
- Increase in demand for demand-led schemes
- Cystic Fibrosis development at CUH
- Medical Assessment Units and Urgent Care Centres
- Co-Location development
- Utilisation of private beds to maximise income generation
- Update on Thomastown Primary Care Team
- Outreach palliative care service provided by two Consultants at Waterford Regional Hospital
- Knock-on effect of staffing embargo
- Home help service and Home care packages and the wish of older people to remain in their own homes as long as possible
- Additional Detox beds X 5 (4 in Cork City and one in Ballyraggett)
- Praise for the dedicated stroke unit at St. Luke’s, Kilkenny
- Developments in Kerry: new CNU in Tralee, new CNU in Dingle and appointment in 2010 of two Community Geriatricians
- Consultant Rheumatologist post for Kerry General Hospital
- New A&E post for Kerry General Hospital
Reconfiguration – hospitals will not close in the South East or South West but the roles of all of them will change. The non viability of having all hospitals operating 24/7 with large overtime bills

€20m additional funding for mental health services in South Tipperary to develop community-based facilities and close inappropriate long-stay facilities

Maternity services in South Tipperary General Hospital

Improvement in access to colonoscopy services with the 2010 aim of all urgent cases being seen within 4 weeks

Access to diagnostics working in partnership with General Practitioners e.g. x-ray service in Mercy University Hospital

Work-up on project for new A&E at Wexford General Hospital

Detailed design of Phase 2 of St. Luke’s Hospital development

Reconfiguration of beds in St. Dympna’s Carlow and it remaining as a Health Campus

Support for NCCP and centralisation of cancer services

Acknowledgement of amalgamation of symptomatic breast cancer services at the Regional Cancer Centre, South at CUH. The BreastCheck screening service future move to the campus of CUH

Access to Audiology and Ophthalmic services

Lengthy Orthopaedic Out-patient waiting lists and usage of NTPF

Rehabilitation services – preparation of plan by Dr. Andrew Hanrahan

Update on Kenmare Community Hospital

Planned seasonal closures with improved theatre utilisation

Appointment of two Consultant Geriatricians in Kerry which will enable progress on a stroke unit at KGH

A&E services at Mallow General Hospital

Communication process with both Oireachtas and Forum members regarding reconfiguration of acute services

Continuation of programme for sale of mental health lands to contribute to development of mental health services

In conclusion, to allow greater debate on local business plans it was agreed that further detail and information would be made available to members at local area Forum briefings and the next committee meetings in April.

4. Reports by Chairpersons of Committee Meetings

The reports of both the (a) Acute Hospitals Services/Population Health Committee and (b) PCCC Committee were approved by members.

5 & 6. Notice of Motions & Questions

As the meeting had concentrated on the Service/Business Plan, the Chairperson agreed with the remaining members that any member who wanted further detail or to make comment on the circulated responses to the following Motions or Questions was to make contact with the Regional Health Office:

**Notice of Motion 5(a)**

“**To ask the HSE South to provide a report to the Forum on the practice of the HSE of test purchasing of cigarettes by minors under the supervision of an Environmental Health Officer. The report should address the issue of the legality of an under-age person being engaged to carry out an illegal act, as I have concerns regarding the difficulties that business owners have in identifying those under age.**”

*Cllr. Michael Healy-Rae*
Notice of Motion 5(b)

“To combat the continuing rise in diet-related ill-health including coronary heart disease, obesity (particularly amongst children), type-II diabetes, cancer, stroke and tooth decay that arises from diets high in saturated fats, salt and sugar, and deficient in essential minerals and vitamins, that the Regional Health Forum calls on the HSE South to support a range of healthy food initiatives including “Grow it Yourself” and allotment schemes which have seen a recent rise in interest in many towns and villages across the country and include community food initiatives, local cafes, programmes at enhancing cooking skills, community supported agriculture etc.”

Cllr. Seanie Lonergan

Notice of Motion 5(c)

“That the HSE South would outline any proposals to provide additional physiotherapy services for those patients receiving long-term care at Castletownbere Community Hospital and also outline any proposals to improve the accommodation space in both Castletownbere and Schull Community Hospitals”.

Cllr. Danny Crowley

Notice of Motion 5(d)

“That the Regional Health Forum opposes the HSE plan to centralise the processing of all medical card applications.”

Cllr. Seamus Ryan
Cllr. Hilary Quinlan
Cllr. Laurence O’Neill

Notice of Motion 5(e)

“That the HSE would provide more Disabled Parking spaces at Kerry General Hospital. Presently there are three spaces at the front of the hospital and two at A/E. This number is totally inadequate and there is plenty of green area that could be utilised to provide more spaces. At the Palliative Care and Dialysis Unit there are no designated Disabled Parking Spaces and many of the patients using these facilities are wheelchair users”.

Cllr. Marie Moloney

Notice of Motion 5(f)

“That the HSE investigate and respond to the increasing widespread public concern regarding the spread of so-called Head Shops throughout the country.”

Cllr. John Coonan

Notice of Motion 5(g)

“With regard to the Nursing Homes Support Scheme/Fair Deal, that the HSE reconsider its position in relation to financial assessments for long-term care and that agreement in principle be sought as an interim measure while financial assessment is being undertaken, thus avoiding un-necessary delays in allocating beds to those in need.”

Cllr. Barbara Murray

Notice of Motion 5(h)

“That the HSE would produce a report outlining:
- The number of bed nights lost in Cork City and County hospitals in 2009 arising from delayed discharges
- The reasons for delayed discharges
The number of procedures which were postponed or cancelled because of delayed discharges
When these procedures will be carried out
The number of people required to spend nights on trolleys in A&E because of delayed discharge
The current status of plans to deliver continuing care beds and the number of continuing care beds provided directly by the HSE in 2006/2007/2008/2009 and which are expected to be provided in 2010.”

Cllr. John Buttimer

Notice of Motion 5(i)

“That this Forum would receive a comprehensive update regarding the new Mammography Screening Machine and its related services at Kerry General Hospital.”

Cllr. Brendan Griffin

Notice of Motion 5(j)

“Considering that there are 1,500 people in Cork waiting to be tested and fitted for hearing aids, including 983 children, and that it is taking up to a year to deal with each patient through the HSE Audiology Department in Cork, that the HSE would examine the feasibility of using the commercial sector to deal with this serious backlog.”

Cllr. Catherine Clancy

Question 6(a)

“To ask the HSE for information pertaining to the assessment of and intervention with children considered at risk in the Cork region for the years 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009:-

- How many children in the Cork region were referred at risk of abuse?
- How many were assessed and found to be at risk requiring intervention?
- What is the average time between referral, subsequent assessment and intervention?
- What is the percentage of risk category each year?
- The number of social workers employed specifically to work with children and families at risk?
- The number of social workers available for out-of-hours duty each night and weekend?
- The number of beds used for each given year i.e. the percentage of occupancy?
- The costs associated with the provision of approved accommodation per bed?
- The number of children who spent nights in residential facilities not approved for children or which are designated for adults in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009, the number of bed nights involved and the reasons why?
- The number of children who have been placed in services out of the region and/or the State for the purposes of residential provision and the associated costs?
- How many vacancies (including unfilled maternity leave) currently exist in social work posts in the Cork region?
- What evaluation of social work services has been undertaken in the last five years or is planned for in the coming five years?”

Cllr. John Buttimer (November 2009)
Question 6(b)
“What plans are in place to provide a Primary Care Centre to facilitate patients on the Beara Peninsula?”

Cllr. Danny Crowley

Question 6(c)
“What is the current position regarding the provision of a Hospice on the grounds of Waterford Regional Hospital?”

Cllr. Seamus Ryan

Question 6(d)
“Can the HSE confirm at what stage are the proposals to transfer acute psychiatric services from South Tipperary to the Department of Psychiatry at St. Luke’s Hospital, Kilkenny?”

Cllr. John Coonan

Question 6(e)
“Can the HSE comment on the ability of its emergency response fleet to deal with extremes of weather which have recently affected the country, specifically floods and extreme snow and ice conditions, and where there were reports that assistance had to be sought from the Gardai, army and members of the local community to enable crews access ill patients, and in the reply can it provide detail on:

- The number of ambulances available for Cork City and County
- The number of first responder vehicles
- The type of vehicle used by SouthDoc
- How many of these are 4x4 vehicles?
- How many have snorkel exhaust systems?
- When the helicopter landing pad at CUH will be commissioned?”

Cllr. John Buttimer

Question 6(f)
“What is the up to date position regarding the construction of the new A&E Unit at Kerry General Hospital, including an update on the tender for the new unit and the anticipated start date for construction of the unit?”

Cllr. Brendan Griffin

Question 6(g)
“What is the current waiting time for Ophthalmic out-patient appointments and Cataract procedures at Cork University Hospital?”

Cllr. Catherine Clancy

7. Date and Time of next Meeting:
Thursday, 11th March 2010 at 2.00pm in Council Chambers, County Hall, Cork.