Making the case for attention and resources
Advocacy and communications in palliative care

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Context
- Almost 29,000 people die each year in Ireland and more than 70% die outside their own home.
- About 6,000 people use specialist palliative care (SPC) services every year but it is estimated that up to 13,000 patients will require access to SPC by 2016.
- National deficits exist for SPC staff and beds.
- SPC budget is declining and is €72m in 2013, yet €1.3b is being spent on unplanned end-of-life care in the Irish health service.
- The recommendations of the key policies on SPC in Ireland are still not fully implemented.

Aims
- To build support for the development of a national hospice and bereavement strategy covering all aspects of dying, death and bereavement in Ireland by
  - Raising awareness of what hospice care means and highlighting the strategic importance of good end-of-life care for the entire health service
  - Advocating for improved coordination, development and resourcing of services for patients and families at end of life.

The Irish Hospice Foundation – founded 1986

We advocate for services, policy development and policy implementation
- 8 point Advocacy Strategy developed
- Politicians in Irish Hospice Foundation
- Greater progress on overcoming infrastructural deficits.

We build capacity to meet end-of-life care needs - £5.7m invested in 2012
- More awareness
- Increased engagement and support of politicians in Irish Hospice Foundation

We develop solutions to make better end-of-life care a reality
- About 6,000 people use own
- More than 70,000 people die in Ireland every year
- Almost 3,000 people die each year in hospital
- National deficits exist for SPC staff and beds.
- SPC budget is declining and is €72m in 2013, yet €1.3b is being spent on unplanned end-of-life care in the Irish health service.
- The recommendations of the key policies on SPC in Ireland are still not fully implemented.

Ten step approach

Engaging in political advocacy

2011-2012
- Increased resources for advocacy
- Consultation around the Irish Hospice Foundation Strategic Plan
- Advocacy set as core objective in Strategic Plan
- 8 point Advocacy Strategy developed

2012-2013
- "Getting to know you"/"getting you to know us" sessions with politicians (ongoing)
- Identified interested Members of Parliament and Members’ interests
- Issue-based contacts established
- Party briefings organised
- Attendance at political party annual conferences

Coordinated whole organisation approach to advocacy
- CEO engages with Ministers and Senior Personnel
- Advocacy and Communications Team engage with Deputies and Senators
- All staff through routine engagement in projects with local/national politicians

LEARNING AND FUTURE PLANS
- “Hospice” resonates with policy makers when it is brought to their attention.
- Robust evidence showing strategic importance of palliative care aligned to Government policy priorities is effective.
- More work is required to show the scope of end-of-life issues and the need for a comprehensive policy and service response.
- Long-term advocacy and communications activity is required to fill information gaps, correct misconceptions and support politicians in promoting public dialogue on issues of dying, death and bereavement.

PROGRESS TO DATE
- Clarification on patients’ healthcare entitlements at end of life.
- Progress on overcoming infrastructural deficits.
- More understanding of the value of advance care planning.
- Greater comprehension of need to protect palliative care budget.
- Increased and on-going engagement and support of politicians in Irish Hospice Foundation

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References (1): Report of the National Advisory Committee on Palliative Care (2001); Palliative Care Services - Five Year Medium Term Development Framework (2009 - 2013); Palliative Care for Children with Life-Limiting Conditions in Ireland – A National Policy, 2010