

**MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE MID-
WESTERN HEALTH BOARD HELD IN THE BOARDROOM,
31/33 CATHERINE STREET, LIMERICK ON
FRIDAY, 14TH FEBRUARY, 2003 AT 11A.M.**

- Presiding/** Cllr/ S. Hillery, Chairman
- Present/**
- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Dr. Y. Begley | Cllr. J. Bourke |
| Mr. P. Burke | Cllr. J. Casey |
| Cllr. B. Chambers | Cllr. J. Clifford |
| Dr. D. Clinch | Sen. N. Coonan |
| Cllr. J. Egan | Cllr./Dr. J. Hennessy |
| Ms. M. Hogan | Cllr. M. Hourigan |
| Ms. A. Kenny-Ryan | Mr. D. McAvinchey |
| Dr. P. McKenna | Mr. L. MacNamara |
| Ms. S. Marsh | Cllr. J. Meagher |
| Ms. M. O'Donnell | Dep. J. O'Sullivan |
| Dr. J. O'Riordan | |
- Apologies/**
- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Cllr. P. Bugler | Cllr. R. Butler |
| Cllr. P. Daly | Ms. N. Fitzpatrick |
| Dr. J. Mullane | Cllr. K. Sheahan |
- In Attendance/**
- Mr. S. deBurca, Chief Executive Officer
 - Mr. G. Crowley, Assistant Chief Executive Officer
 - Mr. J. O' Brien, Assistant Chief Executive Officer
 - Dr. K. Kelleher, Director of Public Health
 - Mr. J. O'Grady, Regional Manager
 - Mr. T. Hourigan, Regional Manager
 - Mr. P. McDonald, Director of Finance
 - Mr. P. Moynihan, Director of Services for Older People
 - Ms. T. Fitzgerald, Staff Officer
 - Ms. O. Hartigan, Assistant Staff Officer
- 1(a) Urnaí Tosáí**
- 1(b) Vote of Sympathy** A vote of sympathy was extended to staff who had suffered recent bereavements.
- 1(c) Minutes** Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 17th January, 2003, were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. B. Chambers, seconded by Cllr. J. Bourke.

2. **Correspondence** Correspondence has been received from the Secretary of Limerick County Council, advising that Cllr. J. Meagher has been nominated to the Mid-Western Health Board.

The Chairman and CEO formally welcomed Cllr. J. Meagher to the Board. Cllr. J. Meagher acknowledged the outstanding contribution that Dep. J. Cregan had made as a Board Member. He referred to his recent positive experience of the services provided by the Mid-Western Health Board and acknowledged the staff in Croom Orthopaedic Hospital.

3. **CEO's Report** **The Chief Executive Officer briefed the Members on the following:**

Meeting with the Department of Health and Children regarding the Service Plan 2003.

The CEO informed the members that the Mid-Western Health Board received the Department of Health and Children's commendation on its performance and the quality of the Service Plan, 2003. He expressed his concern regarding maintaining ELS and that currently services are being provided for which we have no funding. He stated that there are critical underlying funding investment deficits in the service levels which in some cases originate in the 1980's.

Ms. A. Kenny-Ryan asked that the members attend the monthly pre-Board meeting on Service Plans.

Private Hospital

A letter was sent to the Chief Executive of Bon Secours on 5th February 2003 requesting him to confirm the outcome of their Board's meeting in January, regarding a final decision on the Limerick Project. A reminder was sent on 13th February and no response has been received to date.

The Board Members indicated that they would like to have a definite position from the Bon Secours/BUPA group on the matter.

Inisgile

(formerly known as "Villa Maria, Parteen")

There are 38 Elderly People awaiting relocation from St. Joseph's Hospital, Limerick to Inisgile, Parteen.

A meeting between the Board's management and the nursing unions, facilitated by the Labour Relations Commission took place on the 12th February, 2003. A resolution of issues was not achieved. Mr. L. MacNamara indicated that he felt negotiations were successful and that a plan has been put in place for the coming weeks. Mr. T. Hourigan acknowledged that a framework has been set and intensive negotiations are due to take place. However, a number of serious issues have yet to be resolved. Pending resolution of these, he is hopeful that this residence will open in April.

Dates for Service Plan Meetings 2003

The schedule of dates and venues of 2003 Board Meetings were agreed. The dates for the Clare and West Limerick meetings were amended. A revised schedule is to be sent to Board members.

Deputation to the Minister for Health and Children

A deputation has been sought with the Minister for Health and Children to discuss a number of matters which include, Input in to the reorganisation process, Radiotherapy, NDP, Demand Led Schemes - consequences of underfunding, The Closure of St. Joseph's Hospital, Limerick , Disability Services, Breast Care Services.

The Chairman indicated that the deputation should represent all sectors. It should include the CEO, two members from each area and some medical and professional

members. The Oireachtas members of the Mid-Western Region will be asked to participate.

Breast Disease

Sen. N. Coonan expressed his disappointment that Breast Check was only being rolled out to the East at present.

In response to his query regarding Sen. N. Coonan Tipperary North queried was there an interim plan for, the CEO indicated that the position had to be considered in the context of the principles underpinning the provision of services for Breast Disease in the region.

Developments in the Mid-West Regional Hospital, Dooradoyle

Mr. J. O'Brien indicated that the Development Control Plan (DCP) would be brought before the Board at a later date.

In response to Mr. L. MacNamara, the CEO indicated that the Child and Adolescent Unit is included in the DCP for the Regional Hospital.

NDP

The CEO informed the Board Members that no public declaration on funding for 2003 had been received and that there had been no new starts last year. This is particularly relevant to the Hospital of the Assumption, risk management in the Maternity Hospital and Ennis General Hospital.

Cllr. J. Casey welcomed the Board's participation in the Civic Offices Project, Nenagh.

Radiotherapy

In response to Cllr. J. Bourke, the CEO outlined that the report, which was adopted at the January Meeting, was sent to the Department of Health and Children. A reply was received stating that the proposal was being examined and such consideration will be informed by the Report on the

Expert Group on Radiotherapy Services, which is expected shortly.

The Department of Health and Children has been requested to meet the proposers including the Board's management.

Intellectual Disability

In response to Cllr. M. Hourigan's query about the future of services and funding in Bawnmore, the CEO outlined that the Board was aware of the situation in Bawnmore and that this matter had been raised with the Department of Health and Children.

Consultants Posts

The Consultant Rheumatologist, Nephrologist and Vascular Surgeon posts were advertised on Sunday, 2nd February 2003, on a temporary basis. Financial clearance to proceed with the appointment of two Consultant Anaesthetist posts and a Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon has been received. These three posts are part of the Waiting List Initiative and two are already filled on a temporary basis.

Replies have been issued to queries raised by Comhairle in relation to the Consultant Surgeon with a special interest in Breast Surgery and the Consultant in Emergency Medicine.

Mr. J. O'Brien, in response to Cllr. M. Hourigan indicated that the Board is constrained by the job description set out by Comhairle for the Consultant Rheumatologist.

Theatre Nurses Dispute

The Mid-Western Health Board has received notice of industrial action from the INO and SIPTU. The industrial action will take the form of a work stoppage at the Mid-Western Regional Hospital on Monday 17th February and Friday 21st February. This action is part of a nationwide dispute. The HSEA are attempting to re-engage

unions in the formal industrial relations process.

Askeaton Health Concerns

A letter from Dr. P. McKeown is being cited as new evidence, however this letter formed part of the initial investigation. The CEO stated that if there had been any developments that the Board would be the first to re-investigate this matter. However, everything was covered in the initial investigations.

Change in Health Service Structures

The Medical Board wrote to the Board Members expressing their concern over the leaked elements of the Prospectus Report on restructuring the Health Boards into four or five Health Authorities as reported in the media.

Cllr. J. Bourke, Cllr. J. Hennessy and Sen. N. Coonan welcomed the Consultant's statement.

Cllr. J. Bourke suggested that if the Board is to be merged with the Western Health Board and the Southern Health Board, that the Mid-Western Health Board should run the other Boards given its performance.

Dr. D. Clinch was involved in drafting the letter and thanked the political members for their response. He highlighted that the consultants are aware of local sensitivities and peoples needs and are acting on behalf to serve their best interests. He acknowledged that the Mid-Western Health Board had produced remarkable and efficient services within the budgetary constraints.

The letter is an acknowledgment to Executive and Board for serving the needs of the patients.

The CEO indicated that three reports (Hanly, Brennan and Prospectus) are expected to be released into the public domain shortly and that proper consultation needs to take place when the reports are

received.

Physiotherapy arrangements with the South Eastern Health Board.

Cllr. J. Meagher stated that some patients in East Limerick had been receiving Physiotherapy Services from the South Eastern Health Board, but that this service had now been withdrawn. The CEO indicated that he would make enquiries in relation to this matter.

Orthodontics

Mr. J. O'Brien outlined that the Orthodontics assessment list has been reduced by 30% and the treatment waiting list by 50% in 2002. There was 676 patients on the treatment list and 1800 people on the assessment list. Initiatives have been taken to reduce these, such as providing extended hours, however only a small number of staff are available to provide this service.

Mr. J. O'Brien indicated that 230 patients are undergoing private treatment at present. This is up to capacity and the most urgent Orthodontic cases in the Region were seen first regardless of geographical location.

Non Acute Waiting Lists

Mr. G. Crowley indicated that a report on Non-Acute Services for which waiting lists are maintained will be presented at a future Board Meeting.

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Dr. Begley expressed her concern that the waiting list for Child Psychiatry is over 3 months. The CEO outlined that the Board is awaiting two posts from the LAC in relation to Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Speech Therapy

Mr. G. Crowley outlined that in relation to Speech and Language Therapy in North Tipperary a special recruitment campaign is under way. He also confirmed that there are

five new posts in Limerick, this was welcomed by Dep. J. O'Sullivan.

In response to Dep. J. O'Sullivan, he stated that the Speech and Language Therapy waiting list for Limerick is at present being evaluated.

4. Chief Executive Officer's Overview of Financial Results. Report No. 4/03

The CEO stated that the buoyancy which counterbalanced areas is no longer available.

He expressed the need to reconfigure services to match the funds available and the imbalance between Pay & Non-Pay.

The maintenance of the Existing Level of Service (ELS) is the Key Challenge for 2003.

At the end of 2002 there was a €14m underspend in pay due to vacant post. In Non- Pay there was €17.5 m overspend the main contributors being:

Demand Led Schemes, Clinically Driven Costs Insurance Costs, Legal Fees, Capitation Payments , Maintenance Costs, Office Expenses, Medical Equipment

The CEO outlined that capitation and the issues around the foster care allowances have not been resolved, and these are items which the Board cannot control.

Mr. P. McDonald outlined that medical inflation and insurance costs were rising and that the increases in 2003 for insurance would be 40% but the real cost was a lot higher, legal fees would be €1.5million.

The CEO reiterated the impact that the letter of determination would have in terms of Demand Led Schemes, VFM etc. and that this money has to be found within existing resources.

In response to Dr. J. O' Riordan the CEO indicated that ELS has to be maintained within the parameters of funding and the employment ceiling set by the Department of Health and Children and that some development posts, may no longer be available to us.

In response to Mr. L. MacNamara the CEO

indicated that a certain level of flexibility in employment had to be maintained in order to keep within the overall WTE ceiling.

5. **Waiting List Initiative Report January 2003 Report No. 5/03**

The report outlines the Waiting Lists for specialities that have been targeted by the Department of Health and Children. The CEO and the Chairman and Cllr. N. Coonan acknowledged the achievement of the staff in reducing waiting lists. The Department of Health and Children have acknowledged the Board's performance. In response to Sen. N. Coonan, Mr. J. O'Brien indicated that reports on the Out-Patient Waiting Lists were given from time to time.
6. **Report on the Health Effects of Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) in the Workplace Report No. 6/03**

Report No. 6/03 was noted.
7. **National Disease Surveillance Centre (NDSC) Annual Report 2001 Report No. 7/03**

Report No. 7/03 was noted.

Signed/

Cllr. S. Hillery, Chairman

S. deBurca, Chief Executive Officer

Date