

**EASTERN HEALTH BOARD**

*Minutes of Proceedings of monthly meeting of Eastern Health Board held in the Boardroom, St. Brendan's Hospital, Grangegorman, on Thursday 1st November, 1979 at 6 p.m.*

**Present**

Ald. B. Ahern T.D.	Cllr. F. Hynes
Cllr. L. Beiton T.D.	Ms. N. Kearney
Cllr. D. Browne	Dr. D. G. Kelly
Cllr. M. Carroll	Sr. Columba McNamara
Cllr. J. Connolly P.C.	Mr. M. Matthews
Cllr. E. Doyle	Dr. A. Meade
Prof. J.S. Doyle	Cllr. M. Freehill
Cllr. B.J. Durkan	Cllr. E. Stagg
Ald. A. FitzGerald	Cllr. J. Sweeney
Cllr. Mrs. A. Glenn	Cllr. G. Timmins T.D.
Cllr. T. Hand P.C.	Cllr. Mrs. M. Waugh
Mr. K. Harrington	
Cllr. P. Hickey P.C.	

**Apologies**

Mr. H. Corrigan	Cllr. A. Groome
Dr. J. McCormick	Cllr. T. Leonard T.D.
Dr. B. Sheehan	Dr. John Walker

**In the Chair Alderman**

A. FitzGerald

**Officers in Attendance**

Mr. J J. Nolan	Mr. P.J. Swords
Mr. F. Donohue	Mr. F. McCullough
Mr. T. Keyes	Mr. H. Dunne
Prof. B. O'Donnell	Mr. C. Mansfield
Mr. J. Reynolds	Mr. M. Cummins
Mr. R. Lamb	Mr. T. Barry
Mr. P. Lyons	Miss F. Heaney
Prof. I. Browne	Miss E. Larkin
Mr. J. Clarke	

137/79

**CONDOLENCES**

The Chairman advised members of the recent deaths of the father of Miss Nuala McDonnell, an officer of the Board, and of Dr. G. O'Reilly, a former D.M.O. Lucan. The members stood in silence as a mark of respect.

138/79

**CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

On a proposal by Cllr. Sweeney seconded by Cllr. Hynes the minutes were adopted.

In response to an enquiry from Cllr. Hynes regarding his motion proposed at the October meeting it was agreed that the report on dental services and ambulance services in Wicklow for the December meeting, be given to Cllrs. Hynes, Sweeney and Deputy Timmins.

**139/79                      PROCEEDINGS OF VISITING  
   COMMITTEES**

The reports of the following Visiting Committees having been circulated were dealt with as follows:—

- (a) No. 1 Visiting Committee meeting held at Newcastle Hospital on 19th Sept. 1979.

On a proposal by Cllr. Sweeney seconded by Cllr. Hynes the report was noted.

Cllr. Sweeney referring to the shortage of consultant staff said that prior to 1970 the Wicklow County Council had proposed an extra post but this had never been created. In reply Mr. Keyes said that the Board had applied to the Comhairle but the post could not be justified on the basis of population. However, in view of the recently published census figures he had resurrected the matter with the Comhairle and was pursuing the creation of an additional post with them.

- (b) No. 2 Visiting Committee meeting held at Bru Chaoimhin on 26th Sept. 1979.

On a proposal by Cllr. Mrs. Glenn seconded by Cllr. Connolly the report was noted.

Referring to the need for a pedestrian crossing outside the Home Cllr. Mrs. Glenn said she would pursue this matter with the Dublin Corporation. She also asked that the difficulties experienced in having such elderly patients when ill accepted into a general hospital for treatment be examined. She also stated that despite an overall shortage of beds for the elderly there were some beds vacant in Bru Chaoimhin, reportedly because of a shortage of nursing staff.

In a discussion to which Cllr. Connolly, Cllr. Browne, Cllr. Mrs. Waugh, Dr. Meade and Miss Kearney, contributed proposals relating to the staffing of geriatric units were discussed. Mr. Swords said that discussions were being held with An Bord Altranais as to the possibility of setting-up training schools in our own hospitals and thus helping the staffing situation. Increased geriatric training for nurses was also under discussion.

Mr. Nolan said that while it was always difficult to attract staff to hospitals catering for heavy nursing, the number of

staff needed for this type of work would continue to increase as working hours were reduced and the number of patients requiring heavy nursing increased.

The Chairman asked that a report be submitted to the next meeting on the needs of nursing for the elderly. Mr. Nolan said that the report should recognise that the present complements of nurses were fixed at a time when nursing requirements were not so heavy. Examination should also be made of the type and amount of allowances that should be paid to nurses engaged wholly or mainly in geriatric nursing.

The members complimented Matron and staff of the Home on the standard of care being provided.

- (c) No. 4 Visiting Committee meeting held at St. Mary's Hospital on 27th Sept. 1979.

On a proposal by Mr. Harrington seconded by Cllr. Stagg the report was noted.

The members joined with Mr. Harrington in again thanking the staff for the work done during the Papal visit. A record of the number of treatments afforded was included with the report of the meeting.

- (d) No. 4 Visiting Committee meeting held at Legion of Mary Hostel, North Brunswick Street on 17th Oct. 1979.

On a proposal by Mr. Harrington seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Glenn the report was noted.

In reply to Cllr. Freehill, Mr. Swords stated that there were about 10 families awaiting housing and he had recently written to the City Manager asking for closer co-operation between the Board, the Corporation and the Legion on rehousing. Cllr. Mrs. Glenn said that the housing applications from such families should be examined carefully as there was a danger that some families might try to use the Hostel to seek a high priority on the housing list.

- (e) No. 3 Visiting Committee meeting held at St. John's Day Centre. Clontarf on 24/10/1979.

With the members' permission the Chairman then introduced the report on the above visit which was too late to appear on the notice paper.

The Chairman said that it was the unanimous feeling of the Committee that a major problem with the Centre was the matter of cleanliness and permanent cleaning arrangements would have to be introduced. Cllrs. Stagg, Belton and Durkan expressed their concern that the Centre had been allowed to

deteriorate to such an extent and were anxious that a better premises be provided for the facility as soon as possible.

Mr. Keyes said that the Board had not exclusive use of the premises and it was difficult to keep it clean but that arrangements had now been made which he hoped would overcome the Board's difficulties. He was also arranging for some minor decoration work to be done.

The Chairman said that he could see staff problems arising if the new building to house the Day Centre in the area was not supplied as soon as possible and he proposed the following motion which was seconded by Deputy Bel ton anc passed unanimously.

'That an Architect be appointed immediately to plan a new day centre at St. Laurences Road for the psychiatric services of that catchment area in accordance with the schedule of accommodation already approved by the Minister for Health.'

(f) No. 1 Visiting Committee meeting held at Wicklow Hospital on 25th October, 1979.

Members also agreed to consider this report submitted at the meeting.

In reply to Cllr. Sweeney Mr. Nolan said that instructions had been issued to have the work on the electrical wiring in the Hospital put in hand. Cllr. Hynes said that rather than spend £100,000 on the present building the committee recommend the building of a new hospital on the Dublin side of Wicklow town. Cllr. Mrs. Waugh, and Cllr. Browne supported Cllr. Hynes. The recent census showed a very considerable increase in the population in the area which was increased further during the summer months. Cllr. Browne said he considered that a new hospital for Wicklow should be given priority. While he was glad to see upgrading work being carried out on the existing building he would like to have a report submitted on the future proposals for that building and the expenditure involved therein. It was agreed that a report as requested should be submitted to the next meeting.

Mr. Nolan reminded members that the whole question of hospital facilities for the Wicklow and South Dublin area was being considered. In view. of the rapidly increasing population in that area there was undoubtedly a good case for considerably increased hospital facilities both acute and extended care. If the existing building ceased to be used for in-patients then alternative accommodation of approximately 40 extended care beds would have to be provided either at Wicklow and/or Rathdrum. The question of additional acute hospital accommodation was related to the future of St. Columcille's

and to population trends in the area. In any event provision of any new buildings would take some years *ana* in the meantime the existing building would have to be retained and maintained.

**140/79 PROCEEDINGS OF LOCAL (HEALTH)  
COMMITTEES**

The Minutes of the following local health committee meetings having been circulated were dealt with as follows:

- (a) Kildare Local (Health) Committee meeting held on 20/9/1979.

On a proposal by Cllr. Stagg seconded by Cllr. Durkan the minutes were noted.

In reply to Cllr. Stagg Mr. Swords said that there was as yet no response from the Comhairle with regard to the consultants at Naas Hospital; that additional accommodation for geriatrics was listed as a priority for the capital programme which was being discussed with the Department of Health; that a letter was on its way to Cllr. Stagg with regard to laboratory services advising that a small laboratory would be provided at Naas covered by St. James's Hospital and that work was in hand on the Coronary Care Unit.

Cllr. Stagg also expressed concern at the lack of dental services for students between leaving national school and 16 years of age. Mr. Dunne said that it would be a matter for the Minister to extend the services to cover this category. However, the expected introduction of private dentists into the scheme would enable the Board to increase the level of existing services being provided. In reply to Deputy Belton's enquiry about dental services in private schools Mr. Donohue said that such schools may apply to the Board for inclusion in the scheme but he could not recall any such case in recent times. He said this had been discussed at an earlier Board meeting and it was agreed that the scheme should not be automatically extended to such schools while the Board was having difficulty in meeting its other requirements.

Cllr. Freehill said that many eligible persons including medical card holders, children and mothers, have to wait six to nine months for treatment and this should be brought to the attention of the Minister. Mr. Donohue said that the board's priorities are children attending national schools. Expectant mothers and nursing mothers and elderly medical cardholders. While there are 3,000 on the waiting list they are mostly outside the priority groups being in the main students.

He considered that the introduction of the new scheme

should considerably reduce the backlog within the next few months. Mr. Harrington agreed that the problem was mainly shortage of staff. He considered school inspections were not being done often enough and that the 14 to 16 age group was very vulnerable; even if a young person was working at that age he would not be insured under Social Welfare for treatment. The need for orthodontic treatment would increase considerably in the future as other type of treatment reduced, and the present shortage of orthodontists would get more acute. Mr. Nolan said he hoped that the new dental scheme which would shortly operate would help in improving the services.

in relation to developments at St. James's Hospital Mr. Nolan stated that after consultation with Dr. Pigott, Chief Dental Officer, he was of opinion that the Board should be provided with a service facility in the new Dental School being developed at that hospital in substitution for the facility already on the site. As objections were being made by some Dental Hospital representatives to the Board's participation in that development, he wished to have the members' support for his view. On a proposal by Cllr. Browne seconded by Cllr. Stagg the members agreed to support Mr. Nolan's view that the Board should have an adequate dental service facility in the new Hospital.

It was also agreed on Cllr. Browne's proposal to endorse the recommendations and proposals in the Chief Executive Officer's letter of October 3rd to the Agent's Office, T.C.D., regarding provision of suitable alternative accommodation for Eastern Health Board office and store units which are required by T.C.D. for development of the new Clinical Sciences Complex.

Mr. Nolan also referred to his previous reports regarding Cherry Orchard and Vergemount Hospitals and stated that at a recent conference in the Department he had recommended in view of the agreed phasing out of the infectious diseases units in Vergemount, that Cherry Orchard Hospital should cater for infectious diseases only. Including provision on a national scale for unusual diseases. Such as lassa fever, etc. It was agreed on Cllr. Browne's proposal to endorse the Chief Executive Officer's recommendation and to request that the conversion of the units at Vergemount into extended care accommodation the aged should be completed without delay.

Cllr. Durkan drew attention to the concern expressed at meetings over the appointment of consultant staff at Naas Hospital. The situation, he said, was totally unsatisfactory and the Minister should be contacted regarding the permanency of appointments and the appointment of the second consultant surgeon. He also drew attention to the delay in

the Department of Social Welfare benefits and allowances which was particularly wide spread in Kildare and was totally unacceptable. He asked that the Board use its influence to remedy this situation.

(b) Dublin City Local (Health) Committee meeting held on 8/10/1979.

On a proposal by Cllr. Mrs. Glenn seconded by Cllr. Browne the minutes were noted.

Cllr. Mrs. Glenn drew attention to the motion passed at the committee meeting regarding bus passes for mentally handicapped resident in institutions and asked for the support of the Board in this matter. The following motion proposed by Cllr. Mrs. Glenn seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Weugh was passed unanimously:—

"That the Eastern Health board request the Minister for Health to amend the scheme of issue of bus passes to include handicapped persons maintained in institutions -who would qualify if they lived at home and who are in a position to avail of public transport."

(c) Dublin County Local (Health) Committee meeting held on 15/10/1979.

On a proposal by Cllr. Carroll seconded by Cllr. Connolly the minutes were noted.

Cllr. Connolly drew attention to the reference in the report to sudden deaths of *babies* and the motion that a Board seminar be held on the subject. In reply Dr. O'Donnell said that the Medico-Social Research Board have set up a committee to carry out a comprehensive survey of the problem and he recommended that the outcome of this survey be awaited: the members agreed to this.

Cllr. Connolly drew attention to the motion passed at the Local Health Committee meeting regarding the free fuel- scheme and asked the Board to support these motions and this was agreed.

Cllr. Freehill enquired if the report on Children Sleeping Rough was available. Mr. Donohue said that the developments were at a stage where it was not possible to finalise the report but he advised members on developments to date. He said that the Board had established a second day centre and a residential centre for 8 to 10 girls. Plans were advanced for a reception and assessment centre but some difficulty had arisen over the premises selected which had delayed this part of the development. He himself had visited a number of existing residential homes and had succeeded in having some

extra places provided for Health Board cases. He was considering assigning extra nursing staff to assist in the problems related to this matter and would deal with this in his report.

Cllr. Mrs. Glenn congratulated Mr. Donohue and the officers on their progress. She said that the premises being considered for the reception centre was eminently suitable. Some protests from local residents had delayed introduction of that service but she understood that there was now local acceptance of the situation and expected that the matter would be resolved.

The Chairman asked that Mr. Donohue's report be submitted by January at the latest and he congratulated the staff concerned for putting together a service in a difficult situation where no such service had existed before.

#### 141/79 CENSUS OF POPULATION 1979

The following report No. 48/1979 from the Chief Executive Officer was submitted and noted on a proposal by Cllr. Carroll seconded by Prof. Doyle:—

'The preliminary report on the Census of Population taken on April 1st, 1979. has been published. In the Board's area which comprises counts Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow, the total population is 1,163,442 and this represents a net increase of 172,951 (17.46%) over the 1971 Census.

The breakdown of the Census figures is as follows:—

	1979	1971	% Change	
Dublin County Borough	543,563	567,866	-	4.3
Dun Laoghaire Borough	54,217	53,171	+	2.0
Dublin County Area	384,806	231,182	+	66.5
Kildare	97,063	71,977	+	34.9
Wickicw	83,793	66,295	+	26.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,163,442</b>	<b>990,491</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>17.46</b>

The overall increase in population of 172,951 is of very substantial proportions and compares with a total population of 197,782 in the Midland Health Board. The overall increase in population will have a very significant bearing on the Board's programme in i.e. Care of the Aged. In reports sub mined earlier in the year to the Board, it was shown that projections supplied Dy the Central Statistics Office on the number of persons aged 65 and over in the Board's area as at 1981 was given as 97,300. While the details of the 1979 Census including age groups, will not be a available until about June next it is now clear that the population of the 65 years and over in the Eastern Health Board area in 1981 will be



considerably exceeded and in fact it is estimated that the population aged 65 and over as at 1st April last was 117,000 even allowing for some tolerance in our calculations to allow for a considerable increase in the younger age groups. This increase in population, will on the basis of currently accepted ratios, require additional accommodation, over and above that already estimated, in the order of 800 beds, viz. 80/90 assessment/rehabilitation, 350/400 extended care and approximately 350/400 welfare.

The increase in population will also call for additional facilities and staff in Community Care such as Public Health Nurses, increases in the Dental Services and Child Care Services, etc. It will also mean increased demand on the Special Hospital Care Programme."

Cllr. Carroll said that the report only strengthened the Board's case for development of St. Columcille's Hospital, showing that the population of the Dublin County has gone up by 60%. Supporting this Cllr. Doyle said that all the evidence needed to support arguments for the development of the hospital was provided in the Census Report.

#### **142/79 MEMBERSHIP OF WORKING PARTY ST. COLUMCILLE'S AND NAAS HOSPITALS**

Mr. Nolan told the members that he would be meeting the Secretary of the Department of Health the following Wednesday to discuss the future of St. Columcille's and Naas Hospitals. He was satisfied from a review of population trends and of available acute hospital facilities that with the present inadequate level of acute hospital accommodation in the areas concerned the retention of these two hospitals was essential in present circumstances. He would be informing the Department of Health of the similar views of the Board as expressed at the previous meeting, requesting that these two units should be maintained at County Hospital level. Mr. Nolan said that there would probably be difficulty in getting the consultant surgeon and physician posts from an Comhairle but he expected that An Comhairle might look more sympathetically on these posts if the Board would accept linked appointments with major hospitals.

The Board might have to accept such an arrangement even though this might mean that the major hospital concerned would impose control conditions in such arrangements, in the meantime he said he would continue to press for the staff required in each of the hospitals and he would report back to the Board before any decision was taken. The members agreed to give the Chief Executive Officer's proposal their full support.

It was agreed that the working party would comprise of the Chairman and two members each from Wickiow, Kildare and Dublin County Council and two other members.

The following were selected:—

- Cllr. J. Sweeney — Proposed by Cllr. Timmins seconded by Cllr. Hickey  
 Cllr. F. Hynes — Proposed by Cllr. Timmins seconded by Cllr. Hickey  
 Cllr. Stagg — Proposed by Cllr. Durkan seconded by Cllr. Freehill  
 Cllr. B. Durkan . — Proposed by Cllr. Stagg and seconded by Cllr. Freehill  
 Cllr. Carroll . — Proposed by Cllr. Hickey seconded by Cllr. Sweeney  
 Cllr. Hickey — Proposed by Cllr. Carroll seconded by Cllr. Belton  
 Prof. J. McCormick — Proposed by Cllr. Freehill seconded by Mr. Harrington  
 Dr. A. Meade — Proposed by Cllr. Stagg seconded by Cllr. Carroll, Mr. Nolan said that he would have statistics prepared for

the information of the working party and when they were ready the first meeting of the working party could be arranged.

#### 143/79 AGENDA FOR SEMINAR ON ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE BOARD

The Chairman advised members of the proposed seminar and drew attention to the headings for the agenda prepared by Prof. McCormick and himself and circulated to the members at the meeting. He asked for suggestions for any other matters they might want to include. Cllr. Stagg said he would like to have discussed the ways in which members appointed to other Boards as health board representatives should report back to the health board on the meetings of the other bodies that they had attended and he proposed the following motion which was seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Glenn and adopted:—

'That the question of members of E.H.B. who have been appointed as members of hospital boards reporting back to the E.H.B. be placed on the agenda of the Seminar in January.'

Dr. Meade said that he was not sure that a Seminar was needed; that new members could examine the McKinsey Report to acquaint themselves of the powers of the Board and that this could be supplemented by reports from the various areas of the board's operations. Mr. Nolan said that he had instituted earlier this year a review of the management

of the Board along the senior officers and that more recently the management team had been asked by him to examine how the management of the Board is achieving its objectives: the ideas produced in these reviews will form the basis of some of the information that he will provide for the seminar. He considered that the seminar will be a useful opportunity for members to examine the way in which the Board was succeeding in providing the services for which it was responsible.

The Chairman asked Mr. Nolan to have reports from members of the management team for the seminar ready by early December and it was agreed that the date for the seminar would be fixed at the December meeting.

144/79

## NOTICES OF MOTION

- (a) As Dr. Behan was not present the motion in his name was not put to the meeting.
- (b) The following motion was proposed by Clir Freehill:

'That the Minister for Health and Social Welfare be requested to take urgent steps to improve the recently deteriorated service offered to the public by the Department of Social Welfare particularly in the Free Travel Section.'

Speaking to the motion Clir Freehill said that she had occasion to visit a Social Welfare office recently and was appalled at the confusion that exists. There seems to be no information available to the public on where the different services were provided and people were being sent from office to office. She considered that the Board should recommend to the Minister that information be clearly given as to the location of the office providing each particular service, and that the staff of the Department be trained in how to deal with the public.

Clir Durkan supporting Clir Freehill, said that many people who attend at Social Welfare offices have come considerable distances and often fail to get the service they are seeking. He considered that there was not sufficient staff employed to deal with the enquiries that are being made, it was agreed that the following be added as an amendment to Clir Freehill's motion:

and that the following steps are taken:—

1. That a training programme be implemented for staff dealing with the public on how to give help and information to the public.
2. That names of Social Welfare buildings are clearly printed on outside of building.

3. That a Notice Board be erected on entrance to Buildings showing the specific services that are given in the offices and clear direction on where they exist in the building.
4. That information be sent to Citizen Information Bureau on location of Social Welfare Services."

The amended motion was seconded by Sr. Columba and passed unanimously. Cllr. Freehill asked that the Minister for Social Welfare be requested to respond to the Board's motion and that the reply be reported to the Board.

- (c) The Chairman, Alderman FitzGerald, withdrew the motion tabled in his name and said he would be submitting another motion on the same matter to a later meeting.

145/79

## CORRESPONDENCE

The Secretary read the following correspondence: Letter from Joint Committee on State sponsored Bodies, dated 1/10/79 advising of an enquiry into the Voluntary Health Insurance Board and asking for submissions, was referred to the Chief Executive Officer for attention.

1. Letter from Department of Health dated 26th Sept., 1979 advising that the Minister for Health had been presented with the report of the Working Party on Dental Services in Ireland, was referred to Mr. F. Donohue.
2. Letter from Department of the Environment dated 17/8/1979, asking that, where local authorities were being represented at International conferences and meetings abroad, the representation should not in any case exceed three members and where an officer also attends, two members, was referred to Mr. Reynolds.
3. Letter from Department of Health dated 17/9/1979, advising of the creation of 30 additional posts of trainee public health nurse in the Board's service was referred to Mr. F. Donohue.
4. Letter from Department of Health dated 11/9/1979 conveying approval to (a) disposal of 3.65 acres of land at St. Patrick's Home to the Dublin County Council for developing playing facilities and (b) to negotiation with the Council for sites for Health Centres in the County area in exchange for the 3.65 acres. Noted and referred to Mr. Lamb.

6. Letter from Department of Health dated 11/9/1979-acknowledging receipt of the Board's letter of the 5th September regarding the Dublin Regional Hospital Board which is receiving attention. Noted and referred to Mr. Lamb.
7. Letter from Department of Health dated 28/9/1979 regarding the question of pollution of operating departments by anaesthetic gases. Noted and referred to Mr. Lamb.
8. Press Release from the Department of Health dated 26/10/1979 advising of the publication of requests in regard to tobacco advertising. Noted and referred to Prof. O'Donnell.
9. Letter from the Chief Executive Officer, Western Health Board, dated 7/9/1979, regarding the Housing Bill 1979, advising that under the provisions of the Bill a housing authority may exercise discretion as to whether a report be obtained from a medical officer of health in letting houses and that this departure from the 1966 Act would mean that health boards would have no say in housing policy including the provision of housing for the aged. Noted and referred to Mr. Donohue.

The meeting ended at 9.00 p.m.

CORRECT J J. Nolan  
Chief Executive Officer.

Signed .....  
CHAIRMAN