

EASTERN HEALTH BOARD

*Minutes of proceedings of Monthly Meeting
of the Eastern Health Board held in the Boardroom of
St. Brendan's Hospital
on Thursday 2 April 1981 at 6 pm.*

PRESENT

*Alderman B. Ahern, T.D.
Dr. J.D. Behan
Cllr. L. Belton, T.D.
Mrs. B. Bonar
Cllr. D. Browne
Cllr. M. Carroll
Cllr. E. Doyle
Prof. J.S. Doyle
Cllr. B. J. Durkan
Ald. A. Fitzgerald
Cllr. M. Freehill
Cllr. Mrs. A. Glenn
Cllr. A. Groome
Cllr. T. Hand P.C.*

*Mr. K. Harrington
Cllr. P. Hickey P.C.
Cllr F. Hynes
Ms. N. Kearney
Dr. P. McCarthy
Prof. J. McCormick
Sr. Columba McNamara
Mr. M. Matthews
Dr. B. Powell
Cllr H. Reilly
Dr. B. Sheehan
Cllr. J. Sweeney
Cllr. G. Timmins T.D.
Dr. J. Walker
Cllr. Mrs. M. Waugh*

APOLOGY - Cllr. E. Stagg

IN THE CHAIR

Cllr. D. Browne

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

*Mr. P.B. Segrave
Mr. F. Donohue
Mr. T. Keyes
Mr. P.J. Swords
Mr. J. F. Reynolds
Mr. J. Sadlier
Mr. J. Clarke
Mr. P. / Lyons
Prof. B. O'Donnell
Prof. I. Browne*

*Mr. F. McCullough
Mr. J. Doyle
Mr. A. O'Brien
Mr. M. O'Connor
Mr. M. Cummins
Miss E. Larkin
Miss R. Carolan
Mr. M. Hayden
Mr. K. Ward
Mr. J. G. Hanly
Mr. J. Leech*

41/81

CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

(a) The Chairman advised the members that the official openings of Tallaght and Coolock Health Centres would take place on Friday 24 April 1981 and Wednesday 27 May 1981 respectively, at 3 p.m. and stated that all the members would receive a formal invitation in due course.

(b) The Chairman also advised the Board that the Minister had written to him prior to his announcement regarding developments in the mental handicap service and advised him that he was making funds available for the detailed planning of the Mental Handicap Centre at Loughlinstown. He welcomed the Minister's announcement on his own behalf and on behalf of the members.

On a proposal by Dr. Behan, seconded by CHr. Carroll the following motion was adopted unanimously:

"That the Board compliment the Minister for Health on his decision, and convey its appreciation to him for having sanctioned the detailed planning of the residential unit for the Mentally Handicapped in Loughlinstown, and to express to him the Board's hope that similar positive decisions can be expected in respect of the majority of the Board's list of outstanding capital development projects which currently stands in excess of £100 million."

(c) The Chairman informed members that the May meeting of the Board would be held at St. Vincent's Hospital, Athy, on 7 May and that the June meeting would be held at St. Colman's Hospital, Rathdrum, on 4 June.

CHr. Hugh Reilly was given permission by the Chairman to circulate a letter regarding allergy clinics. The Chief Executive Officer stated that this subject had been referred to the Medical and Allied Research Committee, that the Committee had sought information from a number of hospitals and that replies were still awaited from some of them. The hospitals concerned would be contacted again and urged to supply the information requested as soon as possible. Cllr. Reilly stated that he was anxious that this matter be disposed of at the next meeting of the Board. The Chairman agreed that the matter would be dealt with at the May meeting.

42/81

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

(a) Minutes of monthly meeting held on 5 March 1981:

On a proposal by Cllr Hickey, seconded by Cllr Durkan, the minutes were confirmed.

(b) Minutes of special meeting held on 19 March 1981:

On a proposal by Dr Behan, seconded by Cllr Carroll, the minutes were confirmed.

Dr Behan referred to the arrangements which had been made following the adjournment of the special meeting on 19 March and requested permission to reconvene the group which had continued the examination of his memorandum after that meeting. He proposed that the completed report of the group should be sent to the Department of Health and placed on the agenda for the May meeting of the Health Board.

The Chairman said that he felt that the report should not be sent to the Minister for Health before it had been considered by the Health Board.

At this stage Dr Behan withdrew from the meeting.

43/81 QUESTION

On a proposal by CHr Hickey seconded by Cllr Sweeney it was agreed that the Chief Executive Officer answer the question lodged.

Cllr Reilly:

Will the Manager say if he has received an application for grant towards the cost of the new development project for the Walkinstown Association for the handicapped and what action is he taking about it?

REPLY

"An application was received by the Board on 30 March 1981. It will be necessary to obtain information regarding the extent and cost of the proposed project. When this has been received the application will be considered."

44/81 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

On a proposal by Cllr Mrs Glenn seconded by Cllr Doyle it was agreed to suspend standing orders to enable Mrs Glenn to raise a matter which had been discussed at a Community Care Visiting Committee meeting during the week.

Cllr Mrs Glenn referred to a meeting of the Community Care Visiting Committee which had been held at North Clarence Street Health Centre on 31 March 1981.

During the meeting the members became aware of difficulties being experienced by officers of the Board in terms of numbers of staff available and accommodation to deal with the large numbers of persons attending the Centre. CHr Doyle stated that the situation was aggravated by the long delays being experienced by people who were claiming benefits from the Department of Social Welfare.

Following discussion, to which Ms Kearney, CHr Freehill, Prof McCormick and Mr Donohue contributed, the Chairman suggested that item 7 on the agenda (Staffing-Community Care Programme) which proposed the creation of five additional posts of Community Welfare Officer, be taken at this stage.

45/81 STAFFING - COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAMME

The following Report no. 10/1981 from the Chief Executive Officer was submitted:

"I have received a recommendation from the Programme Manager, Community Care, that five additional posts of Community Welfare Officer be created to meet the increasing demand on the supplementary welfare allowance services. This demand is particularly noticeable in the new housing areas and districts of high unemployment.

The Programme Manager's recommendation follows investigations carried-out by the Board's O & M Officer, and I concur with the recommendation and request the Board's approval to the creation of the five additional posts."

On a proposal by Deputy Timmins, seconded by Deputy Belton, the report was adopted.

46/81

PROCEEDINGS OF VISITING COMMITTEES

Reports of the following visiting committees having been circulated were dealt with as follows:

- (a) No. 1 Visiting Committee meeting held at St Colman's hospital Rathdrum on 19.2.1981

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

- (b) No. 1 Visiting Committee meeting held at District Hospital Wicklow on 12.3.1981

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

- (c) Community Care Visiting Committee meeting held in Area 6, (Dublin North West) on 24.2.1981

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

- (d) No. 2 Visiting Committee meeting held at Usher's Island on 3.3.1981

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

Cllr Mrs Glenn stated that the premises at Usher's Island were in a very bad condition and she had formed the impression that they were under-utilised. Following discussion to which Cllr Browne, Cllr Mrs Glenn, Cllr Hynes, Mrs Bonar, Ms Kearney contributed and during which the need for attention to the building and to level of patient care services provided was stressed, Mr Keyes stated that he had been looking at the usage of the entire premises to see if it could be availed of for some of the more urgent needs of the Board. It was intended that the premises would be painted in 1981.

The Chairman stated that the Visiting Committee would be returning to Usher's Island in three months time and they hoped to see improvements.

- (e) No. 3 Visiting Committee meeting held at St Vincent's Hospital, Athy on 24.3.1981

On a proposal by Cllr Durkan, seconded by Cllr Groome, the report was noted.

47/81

**SUB COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN IN CARE AND
THE SERVICES BEING PROVIDED FOR THEM -
APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS**

On the suggestion of the Chairman it was agreed unanimously that the Committee on Children in Care and the Services being provided for them should be a Committee of the Whole House.

48/81

**APPLICATION BY DR DECLAIN CONNOLLY,
3 UPR. MAIN STREET, ARKLOW,
TO EMPLOY A PARTNER**

The following Report no. 8/1981 from the Chief Executive Officer was submitted:

"Doctor Declan Connolly, 3 Upper Main Street, Arklow Co. Wicklow is participating in the Board's General Practitioner Service. He has a list of 1,209 eligible persons and his practice premises are at (1) 3 Upper Main Street, Arklow and (2) Rathdrum Health Centre.

In his letter of the 15 October 1980 he expressed a wish to employ a partner.

In accordance with paragraph 21/22 of the circular letter 8/75 dated 9 April 1975 issued by the Department of Health, the Irish Medical Association and the Medical Union were asked for their observations on Dr. Connolly's request. The Irish Medical Association and the Medical Union have stated that they had no objection to Doctor Connolly's proposal.

I recommend, subject to the approval of the Board, that Doctor Connolly's request be approved and that a Partner for him be selected in accordance with the procedure laid down in paragraphs 21/22 of the Department's circular letter 8/75 dated 9 April 1975.

The relevant extract from this letter is as follows:

'21. The creation of a position as partner, or as an additional member of a group practice, or as an assistant with a view to partnership for the purpose of the general medical service, will be subject to the approval of the Health Board. In considering any such proposal the Board shall have regard to the total practice of the applicant. Before giving approval the Board must be satisfied:

(a) that the creation of the position is preferable to the creation of an additional position which could be filled by open competition in the normal way; and

(b) that the creation of the position will not result in the admission of a particular person into the general medical service while other equally well or better qualified persons are not given a reasonable chance to compete. Where the Chief Executive Officer proposes to seek the approval of the Board to the creation of a position as partner, or as an additional member of a group practice, or as an assistant with a view to partnership he shall, before doing so, consult the medical organisations.

22. Where a Health Board agrees to the creation of a partnership or an addition to a group practice or to the recruitment of an Assistant with a view to Partnership the position will be advertised in the normal way but the doctor or doctors involved or a nominee of the doctor or doctors involved in the proposed taking in of a partner, or additional member or assistant will be entitled to sit on the selection board. The selection board shall pay due regard to any objection of this representative to the giving of the post to a particular individual or individuals. If the Board considers it desirable it may not recommend any candidate for appointment"

On a proposal by Deputy Belton seconded by Deputy Timmins the report was approved unanimously.

49/81

**APPLICATION BY DR WALTER TYRRELL,
632 STH. CIRCULAR RD., DUBLIN 8, TO
EMPLOY A PARTNER**

The following Report no. 9/1981 from the Chief Executive Officer was submitted:

"Doctor Walter Tyrrell, 632 South Circular Road, Dublin 8 is participating in the Board's General Practitioner Service. He has a list of 1,640 eligible persons and his practice premises is at 632 South Circular Road, Dublin 8.

In his letter of the 1 December 1980 he expressed a wish to employ a Partner.

In accordance with paragraphs 21/22 of the circular letter 8/75 dated the 9 April 1975 issued by the Department of Health, the Irish Medical Association and the Medical Union were asked for their observations on Doctor Tyrrell's request. The Irish Medical Association and the Medical Union have stated that they had no objection to Doctor Tyrrell's proposal.

I recommend, subject to the approval of the Board, that Doctor Tyrrell's request be approved and that a Partner for him be selected in accordance with the procedure laid down in paragraphs 21/22 of the Department's circular letter 8/75 dated 9 April 1975.

The relevant extract from this letter is as follows:

'21. The creation of a position as partner, or as an additional member of a group practice, or as an assistant with a view to partnership for the purpose of the general medical service, will be subject to the approval of the Health Board. In considering any such proposal the Board shall have regard to the total practice of the applicant. Before giving approval the Board must be satisfied:

(a) that the creation of the position is preferable to the creation of an additional position which could be filled by open competition in the normal way, and

(b) that the creation of the position will not result in the admission of a particular person into the general medical service while other equally well or better qualified persons are not given a reasonable chance to compete. Where the Chief Executive Officer proposes to seek the approval of the Board to the creation of a position as partner, or as an additional member of a group practice, or as an assistant with a view to partnership he shall, before doing so, consult the medical organisation.

22. Where a Health Board agrees to the creation of a partnership or an addition to a group practice or to the recruitment of an Assistant with a view to Partnership the position will be advertised in the normal way but the doctor or doctors involved or a nominee of the doctor or doctors involved in the proposed taking in of a partner, or additional member or assistant will be entitled to sit on the selection board. The selection board shall pay due regard to any objection of this representative to the giving of the post to a particular individual or individuals. If the Board considers it desirable it may not recommend any candidate for appointment."

On a proposal by Cllr Timmins, seconded by Cllr Belton, the report was approved unanimously.

50/81

**REPORT ON REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE
SUPPLY OF DRUGS AND MEDICINES (TRIDENT
MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS)**

The following Report no. 11/1981 from the Chief Executive Officer was submitted:

"The report by Trident Management Consultants for the Department of Health, reviewing the arrangements for the supply of drugs and medicines, has been circulated to members of the Board.

The report is critical of the arrangements in force. Its recommendations are set out in Chapter 25 and may be summarised as follows:-

A major drug list to cover approximately 60% of all hospital purchases should be introduced. Tenders should be invited for the supply of these drugs at prices below trade prices, and at the same time, a price reduction should be negotiated for the 40% of drugs not included in the major list.

The G.M.S. (Payments) Board should be made the central agency to monitor the system of drug purchasing, including the processing of tenders for the major drugs used in hospitals and for the handling of payments for all hospitals. The G.M.S. (Payments) Board would thus have a data base on all drug usage in the General Medical Services and the hospitals.

The General Medical Services scheme should be amended by:-

- (1) excluding 'over the counter' items (i.e. proprietary items which can be bought without a prescription) and
- (2) including the present long-term illness and refund drug schemes.

Stock control systems should be introduced in all hospitals.

Drug committees to monitor drug usage and waste should be set up in hospitals.

Drugs to be dispensed in generic form where they have been approved in this form by the National Drugs Advisory Board.

(These are products which are sold not by a proprietary brand name but under their official pharmacopoeia title. They are much cheaper than 'brand name' drugs).

The report is critical of general hospitals who do not earn sufficient discounts because they order daily in small quantities. This criticism does not apply to the hospitals operated by the Board as their supplies are obtained from the Central Pharmacy which purchases in bulk, thus earning full discounts.

The Chief Pharmacist monitors the operation of the Central Pharmacy and exercises overall control of the hospital pharmacies.

Formal drugs and therapeutics committees, which can play a major role in achieving economic prescribing in a large general hospital, are not so appropriate for our small hospitals. The Chief Pharmacist favours a more informal approach, which indeed has proved acceptable and efficient. The hospital pharmacist with the co-operation of the medical and nursing staff can achieve a high level of economic usage of drugs. Unfortunately, the staff levels and the absence of support staff allow the pharmacists very little time to visit the wards to supervise control of ward stocks.

In 1970-80 the use of generic drugs was accepted in all our hospitals and homes, particularly in the psychiatric hospitals, where full co-operation was afforded by Clinical Directors and Pharmacists. The Chief Pharmacist has also been in consultation with Professor Meehan, Dr. Draper and Miss Rowan (Chief Pharmacist of St. Patrick's Hospital) with the aim of achieving a common range of generic products.

Discussions are at present taking place between the Chief Pharmacist, the Computer Department and the General Medical Services (Payments) Board, aimed at improving our present stock control system.

It must be remembered that the major portion of our Board's expenditure on medicines is on drugs prescribed under the General Practitioner Service and the Drug Schemes including the Refund and Long Term Illness Schemes. Some of the recommendations of the consultants regarding these schemes will require action by the Department of Health. However, if drug costs are to be effectively reduced the fullest co-operation of all those who prescribe drugs, and of the community in their demand for them, will be necessary."

The Chief Executive Officer introduced his report stating that the Report by the Trident Management Consultants was an important Report for the Health Board and that the Board had spent £5' 2 million on drugs in 1980. The Department of Health had requested the Board's views on the Report before the 17 April 1981. The Report was welcomed by Prof Doyle, Prof McCormick, Dr Walker, Cllr Reilly, Dr Powell made the following points:

1. Hospital doctors cannot write prescriptions on General Medical Services forms. The result is that patients who hold medical cards have to take hospital prescriptions to their general practitioners for re-writing.
2. G M S patients must attend on a monthly basis for renewal of prescriptions while private patients can obtain prescriptions to cover six months supply of drugs without renewal by their doctor.
3. Consideration should be given to the introduction of a fee of, say, 50p per visit to act as a deterrent to over-visiting to the doctor by General Medical Services patients.

Cllr Sweeney expressed concern at the quantity of drugs being prescribed and stated that he felt this area should be examined. Cllr Sweeney was supported in this view by Mrs Bonar.

On a proposal by Deputy Belton, seconded by Deputy Timmins, the report was noted.

51/81

REVENUE ALLOCATION 1981

The following Report no. 12/1981 from the Chief Executive Officer was submitted:

"By letter dated 25 March 1981, the Department of Health has notified the Board of the approved level of net expenditure for 1981 made up as follows:

	£m.
(a) Direct expenditure by the board (excluding its share of the expenses of the General Medical Services (Payments) Board	102.000
(b) Payments in respect of the expenses of the General Medical Services (Payments Board)	13.900
(c) Payments in respect of services provided for eligible patients in voluntary hospitals and joint board hospitals	128.800
(d) Payments in respect of services provided for eligible patients in homes for mentally handicapped persons	11.300
Total:	256.000

The amount of £102m is intended to cover provision of existing services at current levels and as indicated in paragraph 9 of the Department's letter, no additional commitments, extension, upgrading or improvement are provided for.

On the foregoing basis the allocation has been set out in the enclosed book of estimates."

It was proposed by Cllr Freehill and seconded by Cllr Hynes that this item be deferred for consideration at a special meeting of the Board to be arranged, and this was agreed.

52/81

EXPENDITURE ON ST BRENDAN'S HOSPITAL 1977-1979

The following Report no. 13/1981 from the Chief Executive Officer was submitted:

"At the March Board Meeting the Board asked for a report on our expenditure on St Brendan's Hospital in the context of the Minister's comments in Dail Eireann on 17 December 1980.

In the course of his comments the Minister referred to the funds available to the Board for revenue expenditure on maintenance and major and minor capital allocations covering the years 1977, 1978 and 1979 with particular reference to the amounts provided for St Brendan's Hospital. The figures were as follows:

	Total Allocation	St. Brendan's	Per Cent
<u>1977</u>	600,000		
Major Capital Minor			
Capital Revenue	300,000	62,000	20.7
Maintenance Total	1,599,200	353,000	22.1
	2,499,200	415,000	16.6

1978

Major Capital Minor	1,150,000	400,000	34.8
Capital Revenue	350,000	92,000	26.3
Maintenance Total	2,010,200	450,000	22.4
	3,510,200	942,000	26.8

1979

Major Capital Minor	890,000		
Capital Revenue	400,000	370,000	41.6
Maintenance Total	2,386,000		
	3,676,000	965,000	26.3

The £7 million mentioned by the Minister as being available to the Board comprised £1 million of minor capital funds and £6 million maintenance allocations. Our Board maintains 24 hospitals and over 150 other health facilities; nevertheless £1.5 million or 21.5% of the £7 million referred to was spent on St Brendan's.

Each year the Board submitted a list of new capital works which included St Brendan's for which it sought funds. The Board also stated that it felt that the allocations made were inadequate to meet its needs.

The Minister also referred to expenditure since 1966 on St Brendan's and listed the following innovations and improvements: new Admission Unit, new Out-Patient Department, new Nurse Training Facility. The Minister also referred to considerable development in out-patient treatment facilities including day hospitals, out-patient clinics and hostels and referred to these as contributing to a decline in the patient population in St Brendan's from 1,614 to 1,065 in the last 15 years.

On a proposal by Ald Fitzgerald seconded by Cllr Freehill it was noted.

At this stage Ald Fitzgerald referred to the concern expressed by the Parents and Friends of the Mentally Handicapped at the conditions in St Ita's Hospital and suggested that these matters would form the basis of a full inspection of the Hospital at an early date. It was agreed to arrange an early meeting of the No. 3 Visiting Committee at St Ita's Hospital, Portrane.

53/81

PROCEEDINGS OF LOCAL (HEALTH) COMMITTEES

Reports of the following Local (Health) Committees having been circulated were dealt with as follows:

- (a) Dublin City Local (Health) Committee held on 10.2.1981

On a proposal by Ald Fitzgerald seconded by Deputy Ahern the report was noted.

- (b) Dublin County Local (Health) Committee held on 2.3.1981

On a proposal by Cllr Carroll seconded by Cllr Reilly the report was noted.

54/81

NOTICES OF MOTION

- (a) The following motion was proposed by Cllr Sweeney and seconded by Cllr Hynes:

"With regard to the free fuel scheme a limit should be placed on the amount of a second pension a pensioner has along with the OAP and all pensioners therefore would be entitled to participate in the free fuel scheme."

Following a discussion to which Cllr Reilly, Cllr Durkan and Cllr Freehill contributed the motion was agreed.

- (b) The following motion was proposed by Cllr Durkan and seconded by Cllr Mrs Waugh:

"That this Board in the light of the relatively high rate of marital breakdown, particularly among young married couples, consider ways in which it could augment the counselling service currently being provided by the Churches."

Following discussion to which Mr Harrington, Cllr Glenn, Cllr Sweeney, Cllr Carroll, Ms Kearney, Ald Fitzgerald also contributed the motion was agreed.

- (c) The following motion was proposed by Cllr Reilly and seconded by Cllr Carroll:

"That a grant of one third the cost of the new development project for the Walkinstown Association for the Handicapped be unanimously made."

Following discussion it was agreed that Cllr Reilly would pursue this matter with Mr Keyes when more detailed information became available regarding the scope and cost of the proposed project.

55/81

CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) Letter from Western Health Board dated 13 March 1981 regarding increase in housing grants for disabled persons. It was agreed that points made by Cllr Hynes and Cllr Sweeney regarding accommodation for the disabled be included in the communication to the Minister for the Environment.

- (b) Letter 13 March 1981 from Department of Health informing the Health Board that the Minister had on the nomination of the Health Board appointed Dr J Walker and Cllr P Hickey to be members of the Tallaght Hospital Board. The Chairman congratulated the two members concerned on his own behalf and on behalf of the Board.

The meeting concluded at 8 pm.

CORRECT:

P B Segrave
Chief Executive Officer

Signed:

Chairman