

EASTERN HEALTH BOARD

Minutes of proceedings of Special Meeting
of the Eastern Health Board held in
the Boardroom, St Brendan's Hospital
on Thursday, 7 October 1982 at 4.00 pm

PRESENT

Mr N Andrews TD
Dr J D Behan
Cllr L Belton
Mrs B Bonar
Cllr D Browne
Mrs D Clune
Dr E Doyle
Dr R J Draper
Mr P Finegan
Ald A FitzGerald TD
Cllr M Freehill
Mr J Gahan
Cllr Mrs A Glenn

Cllr T Hand
Dr R Hawkins
Cllr P Hickey PC
Cllr F Hynes
Mr D Kane
Dr D I Keane
Dr P McCarthy
Prof J McCormick
Dr B Powell
Cllr E Stagg
Cllr J Sweeney
Cllr G Timmins TD

APOLOGY

Dr J Buttimer

IN THE CHAIR

Dr Mrs A Glenn

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr P B Segrave
Mr F J Donohue
Mr T Keyes
Mr K Hickey
Mr G Brennan
Mr J F Reynolds
Mr L Kavanagh
Mr J Doyle
Mr P J Swords
Mr M Hayden

Mr A O'Brien
Mr M O'Connor
Miss M McGahern
Mr M Cummins
Miss E Larkin
Miss S Keegan
Mr E Butler
Miss M Kelly
Mr K Ward

134/82

**REVISED ALLOCATION FOR NON-CAPITAL
EXPENDITURE FOR 1982**

The following report no. 34/1982 from the Chief Executive Officer and the Chairman was submitted:

The Chairmen and Chief Executive Officers of the Health Boards met the Minister for Health on 21 September, 1982 regarding health board finances. A copy of the joint press statement issued following the meeting is attached for information.

At the meeting the Minister outlined the current economic difficulties and said that all Departments of the State had been affected by the cuts in public expenditure which the Government felt were necessary.

In light of these decisions the Minister stated that there would be no further funds available for the health services in 1982.

Dr Woods said he wished to have a forthright and frank discussion on how the health boards' problems might be tackled and outlined proposals in this regard which had been made by various health agencies (including voluntary hospitals) throughout the country. These included:

- A. abolition of the ad-hoc dental and ophthalmic schemes
- B. transport services reduced and/or transport charges introduced
- C. closure of non-emergency hospital wards for specific periods
- D. a review of the following:
 - 1. on-call and weekend premiums for staff, sick and annual leave substitutes
 - 2. overtime - main areas of expenditure e.g. non-consultant hospital doctors, psychiatric nurses, maintenance staff
 - 3. Substitutes and cost of maternity leave
 - 4. payment to students, including student nurses, at a reduced rate
 - 5. the non-filling of staff vacancies
 - 6. staff canteen charges

These options were discussed at some length.

The Chairmen expressed their understanding of the current difficulties and outlined some steps which they felt the Minister and the Department of Health could take in the circumstances. These proposals were considered with a view to protecting those most in need of services and at the same time involving some contribution or less benefit to those who could afford this.

The measures proposed included:

- A. a review of the drugs refund scheme
- B. charges for hospital in-patient services and some out-patient attendances
- C. the medical card scheme to operate as heretofore, i.e. decisions on eligibility to be based on means only
- D. a review of the role of health boards in the administration of some social welfare schemes particularly the supplementary welfare scheme.

The Minister undertook to give full consideration to these proposals. The serious position of our Board was set out for the Minister. While appreciating the efforts of our Board and our staff and sympathising with the very difficult problems facing us the Minister reiterated that in light of the current national economic situation no further funds could be made available for 1982.

The Minister stressed that the national economic difficulties were not likely to be eased quickly. It appeared now that 1983 would also be a very difficult year. There could, therefore, be no question of a carry over of deficits to next year.

The Board's management team has again looked at the problems facing us in the light of the following considerations:

1. We will be unable to keep within the current allocation for 1982 unless we effect savings.
2. There is very little time left (3 months) within which to effect savings.
3. The prospects for 1983 are, at best, poor.
4. To carry forward a deficit into 1983 is not an option. It would very seriously add to our problems next year. As the major part of our services is provided through our staff, employment is the area which could be the hardest hit.

The most practical measures open to our Board remain those as outlined in report no. 33/1982 viz:

Scaling-down of bed usage and out-patient attendances at Naas and St Columcille's	£100,000
Review of pre-admission assessment of long-stay patients	£100,000
Reduction of payments to extern agencies	£ 250,000
Cessation of 'ad-hoc' Dental and Ophthalmic Schemes	£200,000
Elimination of all purchases of office requisites, furniture, crockery, hardware, beds, clothing etc.	£260,000
Reduction in employment, substitutes and overtime	£350,000
Ambulance and transport savings	<u>£200,000</u>
	<u>£1,460,000</u>

As stated at our Special Meeting on 16 September every effort will be made to ensure that the impact of these cuts in our services will be felt least by those most in need of services.

In light of all of the above considerations, and the information available to us at this time, we strongly recommend to the Board that it adopts the measures proposed.

Following a lengthy discussion to which the Chairman, Clrs Hynes, Hickey, Stagg, Fieelti£, Sweeney, Hand, Timmins, Deputy Andrews, Drs Behan, Kcane, Hawkins, McCarthy, Mrs Bonar, Prof McCormick, and Mr Gahan contributed and to which the Chief Executive Officer replied, the Chairman requested the Secretary to read the following motions in the order in which they had been submitted:

- (i) Proposed by Clr Stagg, seconded by Clr Freehill:

"That the Eastern Health Board refuse to cut its services which are delivered to the very poor in our society. That no charge for the services provided by the Eastern Health Board be introduced. That no cuts in staff numbers be undertaken amongst Eastern Health Board staff. That the Eastern Health Board implement better house-keeping practices to effect savings."

(ii) Proposed by Dr Behan, seconded by Dr Hawkins:

"That the Board accept the Minister's request to implement a further £1.46m in cut backs on condition that the Minister for Health

(a) involves the health board fully in the planning, development, co-ordination and running of the entire health service in its area

(b) that the Minister instruct his Department to provide the information requested by this Board recently to account for capital and revenue expenditure in the health services

(c) that the Board achieve the proposed reduction in staffing levels by non-filling of occasional vacancies without letting current staff go and provided that

(d) the Minister postpone the purchase of unnecessary equipment and postpone the carrying out of unnecessary minor capital works throughout the health service."

(iii) Proposed by Mr Finegan, seconded by Clr Doyle:

"That this Board adopts the measures proposed in an effort to effect the cuts in our services subject to the following amendment -

'That this Board shall not introduce into St Columcille's and Naas General Hospital closure of beds or five day wards.' "

Motion (i) was put and defeated, voting being as follows -

FOR 11 Clr Belton, Mrs Bonar, Clr Browne, Clr Doyle, Mr Finegan, Ald FitzGerald, Clr Freehill, Mr Gahan, Clr Hand, Clr Hynes and Clr Stagg.

AGAINST 14 - Deputy Andrews, Dr Behan, Mrs Clune, Prof Doyle, Dr Draper, Clr Mrs Glenn, Dr Hawkins, Clr Hickey, Mr Kane, Dr Keane, Dr McCarthy, Prof McCormick, Clr Sweeney, Dep. Timmins.

Motion (ii) was put and defeated, voting being as follows -

FOR 6 - Dr Behan, Mrs Bonar, Clr Mrs Glenn, Dr Hawkins, Mr Kane, Dr McCarthy.

AGAINST 19 - Deputy Andrews, Clr Belton, Clr Browne, Mrs Clune, Clr Doyle, Prof Doyle, Dr Draper, Mr Finegan, Ald FitzGerald, Clr Freehill, Mr Gahan, Clr Hand, Clr Hickey, Clr Hynes, Dr Keane, Prof McCormick, Clr Stagg, Clr Sweeney, Dep. Timmins.

Dr Powell abstained.

Motion (iii) was put and carried, voting being as follows -

FOR 21 - Deputy Andrews, Dr Behan, Clr Belton, Mrs Bonar, Clr Browne, Clr Doyle, Prof Doyle, Mr Finegan, Ald FitzGerald, Clr Freehill, Mr Gahan, Clr Hand, Dr Hawkins, Clr Hickey, Clr Hynes, Mr Kane, Dr Keane, Dr McCarthy, Clr Stagg, Or Sweeney, Dep Timmins.

AGAINST 2 - Mrs Clune, Dr Draper

Clr Mrs Glenn, Prof McCormick, and Dr Powell abstained.

The meeting concluded at 5.45 pm

CORRECT

P B Segrave
Chief Executive Officer

Chairman