

EASTERN HEALTH BOARD

**Minutes of proceedings of Monthly Meeting
held in
The Boardroom, Dr. Steevens' Hospital, Dublin 8
on Thursday 2nd September, 1993 at 6:00 p.m.**

Present

Mr. P. Aspell	Mrs. B. Bonar
Cllr. G. Brady	Cllr. B. Briscoe. T.D.
Cllr. E. Byrne	Cllr. I. Callely. T.D.
Cllr. B. Coffey	Dr. R Corcoran
Sen. J. Doyle	Cllr. B. J. Durkan. T.D
Cllr. K. Farrell	Dr. J. Fennell
Cllr. C. Gallagher	Cllr. R Greene
Dr. R Hawkins	Dr. D.I. Keane
Cllr. T. Keenan	Cllr. D. Marren
Mr. G. McGuire	Cllr. O. Mitchell
Cllr. Dr. W. O'Connell	Dr. B. O'Herlihy
Cllr. J. Reilly	Dr. J. Reilly
Sen. D. Roche	Cllr. K. Ryan
Cllr. R Shortall. T.D.	Dr. C. Smith
Dr. R Whitty	Dr. M. Wrigley

Apologies

Cllr. M. Barrett. Cllr. L. Creaven

In the Chair

Cllr. Ken Farrell

Officers in Attendance

Mr. K.J. Hickey. Chief Executive Officer
 Mr. M. Walsh. Programme Manager. Special Hospital Care
 Mr. J. Doyle. A/Programme Manager. Community Care
 Mr. M. Gallagher. A/Programme Manager. General Hospital Care
 Mr. G. Brennan. Technical Services Officer
 Ms. M. McGahern, A/Finance Officer
 Ms. M. Kelly. A/Personnel Officer
 Mr. M. O'Connor. Secretary

4. Regulations under the Health [Nursing Homes] Act, 1990

I wish to advise members that a special meeting of the General Hospital Care Programme Committee will be held on Monday 11th October, 1993 at 11:00 a.m. in the Boardroom. Dr. SteCVCTS' Hospital for a discussion on the Regulations made under the Health[Nursing Homes] Act, 1990.

5. An Bord Altranais Approval - Post Nursing Training, St. Ita's Hospital

I am pleased to inform members that our Board has recently received approval from An Bord Altranais to the continuation of the Post Graduate Training of Nurses in St. Ita's Hospital. Portrane."

92/1993

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING AND MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON 1ST JULY, 1993 AND OF SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON 29TH JULY, 1993

The minutes of the annual meeting and monthly meeting held on 1st July, 1993, and of the special meeting held on 29th July, 1993, having been circulated, were confirmed on a proposal by Deputy Callely, seconded by Dr. O'Herlihy.

[a] Matters arising from, the minutes

Dr. Fennell referred to minute 86/1993 regarding capital developments and, at his request, it was agreed to include, under the General Hospital Care priorities, the development of the Radiology Department at St. Columille's Hospital, Loughlinstown.

93/1993

QUESTIONS TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

On a proposal by Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it agreed to answer the questions which had been lodged.

'1. Cllr. I. Callely. T.D.

To ask the Chief Executive Officer if he will advise has there been any noticeable pattern of over prescribing controlled drugs by general practitioners for drug abusers. Will the Chief Executive Officer indicate what controlled drugs are being over prescribed and what measures can be introduced to prevent such abuse.

Reply

The issue of the over prescription of controlled drugs by general practitioners for drug users is regularly monitored by the Health Board's AIDS/Drugs Coordination Unit, in conjunction with the Department of Health and the Gardai. The main drugs where there is a potential for over prescription are morphine sulphate tablets [MST], rohypnol and, on occasion, methadone.

From the refund of drug scheme returns it is clear that quite a lot of controlled drugs are prescribed by general practitioners on private prescriptions to drug takers. It is difficult at this stage to determine which are over prescribed and which are genuine attempts by general practitioners to provide a treatment service when such service is not available through Health Board clinics or the Drug Treatment Centre. The measures that are being undertaken to prevent such over prescribing are the setting up of community based clinics which have previously been debated by the Health Board. Clinics are currently operated by our Board at Baggot Street Cherry Orchard and Amiens Street and, it is intended, as resources permit, to provide additional clinics around the city.

A protocol on the prescription of methadone which has been drawn up by an expert group has been submitted to the Minister for Health. Discussions have commenced between the Health Board, the Drug Treatment Centre and the Department of Health on the steps necessary to implement the protocol. This protocol, if followed and adopted by general practitioners, should considerably reduce any over prescribing.

2. Cllr. I Calley, T.D.

To ask the Chief Executive Officer if he will advise of all monies due, and from whom, to the Eastern Health Board. Can the Chief Executive Officer indicate what monies, if any, are due to rent arrears from doctors.

Reply

The total amount of monies due to the Eastern Health Board, as at 30th June, 1993 was £41.7m. broken down as follows:-

	£
Department of Health	34.5m
Local Authorities	2.4m
Hospital patient accounts	2.25m
European Social Fund	1.0m
Superannuation contributions	0.85m
Social Employment Scheme	0.17m
Miscellaneous	0.53m
	£41.7m

Included in the figure of £0.53m under the heading of miscellaneous is an amount of £16.779 in respect of rents due by doctors as at 31st December, 1992. Under the agreement reached in November 1992 between the Department of Health and the Irish Medical Organisation on the arrangements for the provision of services under Section 58 of the Health Act it was provided that all doctors participating in the G.M.S. Scheme be exempted from payment of rent effective from 1st January, 1993.

3. Cllr. I Calley, T.D.

Can the Chief Executive Officer indicate the average processing period for a general practitioner's application to take on an assistant to be approved by the Eastern Health Board. Has the Chief Executive Officer any proposals to speed up this process?

Reply

Arrangements for future entry of doctors to the GMS Scheme is one of the items waiting further discussions under the GMS Review. The main focus in recent-months has-been on the establishment of GP Units at national and health board levels, respectively.

An application by a doctor in the GMS Scheme to take on an assistant would normally be considered and decided upon in a period of three months approximately. However, decisions on such applications have been deferred pending the outcome of the Review of future arrangements for entry to the GMS. It may be possible to process some applications pending the outcome of the Review and this is currently under active consideration.

4. Cllr. J. Reilly

To ask the Chief Executive officer if he is aware that County Kildare has an ageing Ambulance fleet, and can he say when the Eastern Health Board will begin to replace same.

Reply

The rate of replacement of vehicles in our Board's ambulance fleet, including Co. Kildare. has been affected by budget constraints in recent years.

A total review of our Board's fleet of 192 vehicles has taken place recently and a programme of vehicle replacement is now planned related to the mechanical condition of the vehicles and their general road-worthiness.

5. Cllr. E. Byrne

Will the Chief Executive Officer outline the regulations that require an applicant for a rent subsidy to provide letters of proof from a Garda. Parish Priest to verify that the applicant is genuinely in need of private rented accommodation.

Reply

Guidelines have been issued by the Department of Social Welfare in relation to various contingencies in the making of payments by way of rent/mortgage supplements.

Particular guidelines were issued in relation to the assessment of applications from young persons who have left their family home which require the Community Welfare Officer to satisfy himself as to the reasons for young persons having left home. Where the reasons given by the young person relate to serious problems within the family the guidelines require that these problems should be verified by a Social Worker or other person/agency familiar with the family situation. The latter would include Gardai and Clergymen."

94/1993**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**

The Chief Executive Officer read the following report which was noted and agreed subject to the comments recorded below:-

"1. Appointment of Women to State Boards

I have circulated with the agenda papers for this meeting, copies of letter dated 15th July, 1993 from the Minister for Health advising that the Government, having considered the report of the Commission of the Status of Women, has adopted a policy that a minimum representation of 40% of both men and women should be achieved in the membership and, where possible, in the Chairmanship of Boards of State Bodies.

Members will note the Minister's request that our Board, when submitting nominations of suitable persons for appointment to State Boards, would include, where practicable, a minimum of 40% representation of both sexes in our nominations.

2. Dental Ilgjoienists

I have circulated with the agenda papers for this meeting, copies of letter dated 23rd July, 1993 from the Department of Health, advising that, in accordance with the provisions of the Programme for a Partnership Government, a new grade of auxiliary dental worker, the Dental Hygienist, will shortly be introduced into the health board dental services.

Arrangements are being made for the submission of our Board's proposals to the Department of Health for the creation of Dental Hygienist posts. The Community Care Programme Committee will be advised of progress in due course.

3. Disabled Persons [Maintenance Allowances/ Regulations 1993 and Infectious Diseases [Maintenance Allowances [Regulations 1993

I have circulated with the agenda papers for this meeting copies of letter dated 28th July, 1993 from the Department of Health enclosing copies of the Disabled Persons [Maintenance Allowances] Regulations 1993 and the Infectious Diseases (Maintenance Allowances) Regulations 1993.

These Regulations provide for payment of the 1993 budgetary increases with effect from 19th July, 1993. The Disabled Persons {Maintenance Allowances} Regulations include a number of amendments in the administration of the scheme and this aspect of the Regulations can be considered in greater detail at a meeting of the Community Care Programme Committee.

4. A.I.D.S./HIV Statistics

I have circulated with the agenda papers for this meeting, for the information of members, copies of a statement issued on behalf of the Minister for Health on 13th August, 1993 giving the latest statistics on HIV/AIDS.

The statistics show an increase of 5 new cases of AIDS since the 30th June, 1993. There were no reported cases of deaths from AIDS since that date.

A total of 1389 tests for HIV antibodies have proved positive up to 30th June, 1993. This represents an increase of 14 positive cases since the end of May, 1993.

The HIV statistics show that IV drug abusers represent 51% of the total, homosexuals 18% and heterosexuals 13%.

5. *Calculation of Rent/Mortgage Supplements*

I have circulated with the agenda papers for this meeting, copies of Department of Social Welfare Circular 10/93 setting out the method to be used in calculating rent/mortgage supplements in the case of applicants in receipt of a long-term social welfare payment who have dependant children over 18 years of age in full-time education.

6. *People of the Year Awards 1993*

I have circulated with the agenda papers for this meeting, copies of letter received from the Chairman of the Adjudicating Committee for the People of the Year Awards, 1993, inviting nominations. Any member who wishes to make a nomination should contact Mr. Matt O'Connor, Secretary.

7. *Medical Practitioners [Amendment] Act, 1993*

I have circulated with the agenda papers for this meeting, copies of the Medical Practitioners (Amendment) Act, 1993.

The Act facilitates the computerisation of the Medical Register and clarifies the position regarding the taking of specimens of blood or urine by a registered medical practitioner.

8. *Health Family Planning Amendment Act, 1993*

I have circulated with the agenda papers for this meeting, copies of the Health (Family Planning Amendment) Act 1993.

The Act empowers the Minister for Health to make regulations to prohibit the sale or the offering for sale of contraceptive sheaths by vending machines at a place of a class specified in the regulations and also to prescribe standards for contraceptive sheaths.

9. *Health Services News*

I have circulated with the agenda papers for this meeting, copies of the August 1993 edition of the Health Services News which is published by the Health Services Development Unit of the Institute of Public Administration

10. Measures to fight Measles outbreak

Members will, no doubt, be aware of recent media reports regarding the significant increase in the number of reported cases of measles in our Board's area in recent times. The number of reported cases has increased 13-fold this year to a total of 1000 cases.

Our Board responded to this increase by asking Public Health Nurses and General Practitioners to urge parents to have their children vaccinated. We have also written to all schools in our Board's area stressing the benefits of having children vaccinated.

In this regard, I have circulated this evening for the information of members, copies of a statement issued by the Minister for Health on 27th August, 1993 when he announced a number of measures to tackle the problem of the low uptake of MMR [Measles, Mumps, Rubella 1 Vaccine].

11. Health [Nursing Homes] Act, 1990

I have circulated for the information of members, copies of a statement issued by the Minister for Health on 31st August, 1993 giving details of the Regulations under the Health (Nursing Homes) Act, 1990 which came into effect on 1st September, 1993.

As the Chairman has already announced these Regulations will be the subject of a detailed discussion at a special meeting of the General Hospital Care Programme Committee to be held on 11th October next.

12. General Practice Development Fund

I have circulated this evening for the information of members, copies of circular 7/93 dated 26th August, 1993 from the Department of Health regarding the allocation by the Department of resources from the General Practice Development Fund to implement national and regional programmes to support developments in general practice. The developments being supported are in the areas of palliative care, immunisation/screening, information systems and a once-off allocation for other developments in general practice.

Further details regarding the implementation of the terms of this circular will be given at the next meeting of the Community Care Programme Committee.

13. Hospital Therapeutic Committees

I have circulated this evening, for the information of members, copies of Circular 8/93 dated 27th August, 1993 from the Department of Health regarding the recommendation of the National Therapeutics Advisory Committee in relation to the re-activation and public strengthening of hospital therapeutics committees with the objective of making prescribing of drugs in this country as safe and cost-effective as possible.

Arrangements are being made to ensure that the provisions of the circular are fully implemented within our Board's hospitals.

14. **Donation of £40,000 towards hostel programme**

I am pleased to inform members that a family member of one of our Hostel residents has kindly donated £40,000 in appreciation of the quality of care provided by our Board to be used in the general development and management of our Hostel programme on the north side of Dublin.

15. **Back -to-School Clothing and Footwear Scheme**

Details of the 1993 Back-to-School Clothing and Footwear Scheme were announced by the Department of Social Welfare on 6th May, 1993.

Application forms for use in processing claims under the Scheme were printed and issued to each person who had received an allowance in 1992. These forms were posted on 21st June, 1993. (Total: 35,000 forms]

Most application forms were returned to the Central Processing Office during week commencing 19th July, 1993.

The first batch of cheques were posted on 11th August and by 17th August 5,000 cheques had been issued. Another 6,400 cheques had issued by 27th August and a further 10,474 cheques were issued by 28th August. 4,310 cheques issued on 1st September - a total of 26,184 cheques at a cost of £2.6m.

It is planned to issue a further 5,190 cheques by Tuesday 7th September, 1993.

A number of problems arose which contributed to the delay in the issuing of the cheques:

1. The process of determining eligibility;
2. The validation process used in the production of cheques;
3. The uneven rate at which application forms were returned which created peak pressures during the latter weeks of the Scheme.

As members will be aware, a considerable effort is being made to ensure that our Board's services are consumer friendly. Having examined all the factors involved in the delays this year it must be accepted that there is scope for significant improvements in the administration of this scheme. Steps have been taken to ensure that there will not be a recurrence of this position in 1994.

The delays caused to applicants are sincerely regretted."

On a proposal by Councillor Brady, seconded by Deputy Callely, it was agreed to accept the donation of £40,000 referred to in item no. 14.

Following a discussion on the Back-to-School Clothing and Footwear Scheme to which Deputy Shortall, Senator Roche, Cllr. Byrne, Deputy Callely, Cllr. Ryan, Cllr. Reilly, Deputy Durkan, Dr. Corcoran, Deputy Briscoe contributed and to which the Chief Executive Officer and Mr. Doyle, Programme Manager, Community Care Service replied, it was agreed to note the position as outlined by the Chief Executive Officer and that a report would be circulated during May, 1994 in relation to the operation of the next years Scheme.

Following a discussion on the MMR Campaign to which Cllr. Byrne, Deputy Callelyj, Cllr. Reilly, Dr. Reilly, Deputy Durkan, Dr. Hawkins, Dr. O'Herlihy contributed and to which Professor O'Donnell Dublin Medical Officer of Health replied, the measures which had been taken to increase the uptake of the MMR Vaccination were noted.

95/1993

COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL [AMENDMENT] ACT. 1993

Report no. 24/1193 from the Chief Executive Officer was submitted [copy filed with official minute].

The Report was noted.

96/1993

PROGRESS REPORTS FROM PROGRAMME COMMITTEES

I. Special Hospital Care Programme Committee

On a proposal by Dr. O'Herlihy, seconded by Cllr. Coffey, it was agreed to adopt the reports.

The following matters were dealt with in the reports:-

- [a] Acquisition of 157 Rathgar Road as replacement for houses at Mt. Pleasant Square.
- [b] Discussions with Walkinstown Association for the Mentally Handicapped.
- [c] Opening of new 40-bed Acute Admission Unit at St. Vincent's Hospital. Fairview.
- [d] Acute Psychiatric Unit. Mater Hospital
- [e] Report on services at Sunbeam House.
- [f] Consultant Psychiatrist post in Tallaght
- [g] Permanent Consultant appointments.
- [h] Development Officers, Mental Health Association.
- [i] Postgraduate Training in Mental Handicap. St Ita's Hospital.
- [J] Report on services at Dunfirth Autistic Community. Enfield. Co. Kildare.

2. General Hospital Care Programme Committee

On a proposal by Deputy Callely, seconded by Dr. Hawkins, it was agreed to adopt the report.

The following matters were dealt with In the report:-

- [a] Evaluation report on Mobile Day Hospital.
- [b] Discussions regarding joint appointment of a Consultant Radiologist for Naas General Hospital and M.A.N.C.H. Group of Hospitals.
- [c] Review of Naas Hospital planning brief.
- [d] Department of Health grant for replacement of screening equipment in X-Ray Department, St. Columcille's Hospital
- [e] Appointment of Mr. S. J. O'Flanagan as Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon in James Connolly Memorial Hospital.
- [f] Report on services in Clonskeagh Hospital.
- [g] Health (Nursing Homes] Act 1990.
- [h] Discussions with Our Lady's Hospital. Crumlin regarding structuring of a Consultant Paediatrician Post with St. Columcille's Hospital.
- [i] Report on services in St. Brigid's Home. Crooksling.

In response to enquiries from Deputy Durkan and Cllr. Reilly Cllr. Gallagher, Acting Programme Manager, General Hospital Care, infbrmed the members that the Review Group for Naas General Hospital had had its first meeting and that another meeting had been arranged. Progreess will be advised to the General Hospital Care Programme Committee on a regular basis.

3. Community Care Programme Committee

On a proposal by Deputy Callely, seconded by Cllr. Reilly, it was agreed to adopt the report.

The following matters were dealt with in the report:

- [a] Election of Senator R Roche as Chairman, and of Cllr. D. Marren as Vice-Chairman. of the Committee.
- [b] Annual Report for 1992 for the General Medical Services [Payments] Board.
- [c] Report on services for the elderly.
- [d] Report on services in Community Care Area no. 10.

97/1993

NOTICES OF MOTION

1. The following motion was proposed by Deputy Callely and seconded by Cllr. Keenan:-

"That this Board recognise the need for the provision of the psychiatric services from the purpose-built unit in Beaumont Hospital and agree a delegation of board members to meet the Beaumont authorities to discuss and agree a time scale for the psychiatric service to come on stream."

In agreeing' the terms of the motion, members noted that the Programme Manager, Special Hospital Care, would bring to the next meeting of the Special Hospital Care Programme Committee a framework document prepared by a working group appointed to review integration of the acute unit at Beaumont Hospital with our Board's community psychiatric service.

2. **The following motion was proposed by Cllr. Marren and seconded by Cllr. Coffey:-**

"Aware of the valuable service provided by the private nursing homes to the elderly and to the wider community in the Board's administrative area: and aware also of the cashflow problems which many of them are experiencing, the Eastern Health Board resolves to make all subvention payments to such nursing homes within one calendar month following the application for such payments as are properly due."

Following a discussion to which Cllr. Marren, Cllr. Coffey, Cllr. Byrne, Senator Roche and Deputy Shortall contributed, Mr. Gallagher, Programme Manager, General Hospital Care, informed the members that in order to reduce public expenditure, our Board is required to operate within the strict cash and overdraft accommodation limits prescribed by the Department of Health and that, as a consequence, delays occur in issuing cheques to all our Board's clients including Nursing Homes, Children's Homes, Day Nurseries etc. Having regard to our current cash position it was not possible to guarantee that all subvention payments would be made within one month from the date of the claim. A schedule of payments had been drawn up to the maximum of the overdraft and cash available and current settlement dates had been given to all creditors. With regard to the amounts due to Nursing Homes he gave the following age analysis of cheques being held:-

Current	33%
One Month	38%
Two Months	22%
Three Months	7%

In agreeing the terms of the motion members asked that an injection of cash into our Board's cashflow by the Department of Health should be vigorously pursued with the Department.

Deputy Shortall noted against the motion.

3. **The following motion was proposed by Deputy Shortall and seconded by Senator Roche.**

"That an additional Occupational Therapist be appointed to Area 7 as a matter of urgency as the present situation, where there is one Occupational Therapist for a population of 120,000 with a high number of medical card holders, is totally unacceptable."

Following a discussion to which Deputy Shortall Senator Roche and Cllr. Coffey contributed, the Chief Executive Officer informed members that the coasmmt of Occupational Therapists-is few per Community Care area and that a report on our Board's Occupational Therapy needs mould be prepared fur a future meeting of the Community Care Programme Committee, following a detailed examination of our Board's manpower needs in each Community Care area.

4&5 The following motions were proposed by Dr. Reilly and seconded by Cllr. Coffey.

That this Health Board urges the Department of Education to accept Autism as a specific syndrome which requires a specific educational approach."

That this Health Board accepts that there is a need for a Specialised Centre for the diagnosis of Autism against universally accepted criteria and wm endeavour to establish same."

Following a discussion to which Dr. Reilly, Senator Roche, Cllr. Coffey and Deputy Callely contributed, and to which the Chief Executive Officer replied, members, in agreeing the motions, noted that a report in relation to the implementation of the two resolutions would, be prepared far consideration at a future meeting of the Special Hospital Care Programme Committee following its forthcoming meeting in Gheel Ltd.

98/1993

CORRESPONDENCE

Items of correspondence, as referred to in the Chief Executive Officer's Report, copies of which had been circulated, were noted.

The meeting concluded at 8.30 p.m.

Correct: K. J. Hickey
Chief Executive Officer


CHAIRMAN

EASTERN HEALTH BOARD

Report no. 24/1993

Comptroller and Auditor General [Amendment] Act, 1993

I attach, for the information of members, a copy of the recently enacted Comptroller and Auditor General [Amendment] Act, 1993.

Section 6 provides that the accounts of health boards shall be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General. As members are aware Section 28 of the Health Act, 1970, which is now repealed had provided that the accounts of a health board should be audited by a Local Government Auditor appointed by the Minister for Health following consultation with the Minister for the Environment. The Abstract of Accounts of a health board, having been certified by the Local Government Auditor, were sent by him to the Minister for Health and to the local authorities who appoint members to the health board. The Minister for Health laid copies of the Abstract before each House of the Oireachtas and sent copies to the Minister for Finance.

The procedures to be followed by the Comptroller and Auditor General in the audit of the accounts of a health board are set out in detail in Section 6 of the Act. Upon completion of his audit he shall submit copies of the accounts, together with his certificate under subsection [3] and report under sub-section [4], to the health board and to the Minister for Health, who shall cause copies of the accounts, certificate and report to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas.

Section 9 of the Act provides that the Comptroller and Auditor General may carry out such examinations as he considers appropriate for the purpose of ascertaining whether resources have been acquired or disposed of economically and efficiently and whether disposals of funds have been effected upon the most favourable terms reasonably obtainable. Sub-section [2] provides that the systems, procedures and practices employed to evaluate the effectiveness of operations may be examined by the Comptroller and Auditor General and sub-section [3] provides that in carrying out such an examination he may make such comparisons, including comparisons of systems, procedures and practices, as he considers appropriate. Sub-section [4] provides that where the Comptroller and Auditor General proposes to make any examination under Section 9, he may, at his discretion, seek the views of the Public Accounts Committee.

The impact of the implementation of this legislation on our Board will be advised to the Budget Working Group on a regular basis.

26th August, 1993

K.J. Hickey
Chief Executive Officer