

SOUTH WESTERN AREA HEALTH BOARD

Minutes of the proceedings of meeting of the South Western Area Health Board held in the Board Room, Dr Steevens' Hospital, on Tuesday, 3rd April, 2001, at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Mr. P. Aspell
Cllr. T. Cullen
Dr. K. Harkin
Ms. M. Hoban
Cllr. M. Miley
Cllr. C. O'Connor
Sen. T. Ridge
Cllr. J Wall, T.D.

Cllr. E. Byrne
Dr. M. Gueret
Ms. A. Harris
Cllr. C. McGrath
Dr. B. Murphy
Cllr. J. Reilly
Cllr. D. Tipping

Observers

Mr. G. McGuire

Apologies

Cllr. C. Byrne

Mr. M. Murphy

In the Chair

Cllr. C. O'Connor

Officers in Attendance

Mr. P. Donnelly, Chief Executive
Ms. B. Clarke, Assistant Chief Executive
Mr. P. Bennett, Assistant Chief Executive
Mr. H. Kane, Assistant Chief Executive
Mr. R. Healy, A/Senior Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Ms. C. Cuffe, Senior Manager, Operations
Ms. A. Farrell, Administrative Support, Chief Executive's Office
Ms. P. Dempsey, Administrative Support, Chief Executive's Office

35/2001

CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chairman advised members of the following:-

1. *Condolences*

I am sure members will join with me in expressing sincere sympathy to those whose names have been included on the list of condolences which has been circulated to members. I note the death of the father of Mr Philip Doyle, Head of Estate & Facilities, and would like to also mention that the father of Mr. Michael Kelly, Secretary General, Department of Health and Children, has also died recently.

Finally, as Mr. Charlie Reilly, brother of the Vice-Chairman, died tragically just before St. Patrick's Day, I intend to adjourn the Business of the meeting for five minutes as a mark of respect.

Following the five minute adjournment the Chairman proceeded with the following further announcements:-

2. *Change of Meeting Venue*

The venue for the forthcoming meeting of the Community Services and Continuing Care Standing Committee has been changed to City West Hotel, Saggart. Members will be notified in writing of the amended details.

3. *New National Health Strategy*

The Minister for Health and Children, Mr. Micheál Martin, has informed me of the consultation process in relation to the new National Health Strategy. He wants to ensure that he is including members of the Health Boards in the country in this process by giving these members an opportunity to consult and discuss issues they believe should be addressed in the strategy and that their views be reflected in the process by way of submission.

I therefore suggest that we hold a workshop in April to discuss this matter. The venue and date will be notified to members when arranged.

4. *Environmental Health Issue*

Two members have brought to my attention their concerns regarding the burial of a possibly BSE-contaminated cow in the Wicklow area. I have brought their concerns to the Chief Executive who has agreed to make urgent enquiries through the Environmental Health Services in this regard.

5. *Order of Business*

Since the last Board Meeting I have been considering the Order of Business and how we get through work on the day. I have consulted with the Chief Executive and there have been a number of meetings of the Protocol and Procedures Committee at which the business at Board Meetings was discussed. I would therefore like to draw your attention to the Progress Report relating to these matters.

I am very aware of the fact that two major reports were deferred from the last Board Meeting and so, with your co-operation, I propose that we implement immediately the recommendations of the Protocol and Procedures Committee in order that we get through the Agenda for today.

A lengthy discussion followed regarding this issue which incorporated the Progress Report of the Protocol & Procedures Committee (*Item No. 8 on agenda*) to which the following members contributed:- Cllr. T. Cullen, Cllr. E. Byrne, Mr. G. McGuire, Dr. B. Murphy, Cllr. D. Tipping, Cllr. J. Reilly, Cllr. C. McGrath, Mr. P. Aspell, and Cllr. C. O'Connor.

The following points were raised:-

- Members emphasised the importance of ensuring that the business of the Board, particularly relating to policy documents/issues, is completed in a prompt and efficient manner at Board Meetings.
- Members requested that the opportunity to raise urgent matters not tabled on the agenda continue to be facilitated.
- Members paid tribute to the Protocol & Procedures Committee on their work in examining this issue.

In conclusion, the following amendments to the revised Order of Business were agreed:-

1. Matters Arising will not be raised after confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting. "Matters for Mention/Matters Arising from the Minutes" will now be tabled following the Chief Executive's Report.
2. Matters for Mention, i.e. issues of an urgent nature not tabled on the agenda, should be brought to the attention of the Chief Executive or Chairman prior to the commencement of the meeting.

On a proposal by Cllr. C. McGrath, seconded by Cllr. D. Tipping, the Progress Report of the Protocol and Procedures Committee was adopted, pending the inclusion of the amendments to the revised Order of Business.

The changes to the Order of Business to be implemented on a trial basis and to be reviewed in the future to determine their efficacy.

Cllr. E. Byrne requested that his dissent regarding these amendments be recorded.

36/2001

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF BOARD MEETING HELD ON 6th MARCH, 2001

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting held on 6th March, 2001, having been circulated, were confirmed on a proposal by Cllr. J. Reilly, seconded by Dr. B. Murphy.

37/2001

QUESTIONS TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

On a proposal by Cllr. J. Reilly, seconded by Cllr. M. Miley, it was agreed to answer the questions which had been lodged.

1. Cllr. Jim Reilly

“To ask the Chief Executive if he will outline up to date details of this Board’s proposals to purchase St. Mary’s Naas, (Kildare Co. Co. H.Q.) and will he make a statement on the matter?”

Reply:

The Board's Head of Estate & Facilities, Mr. Philip Doyle, has had ongoing negotiations with the agents of Kildare County Council in relation to the valuation of this property and how the two organisations should proceed. These discussions have almost reached conclusion.

I now propose that myself and Mr. Niall Bradley, Kildare County Manager, convene a meeting of Kildare County Council Health Board Members to discuss this matter as soon as possible.

I am hoping that this matter can be concluded in the next couple of weeks and that the matter will be brought to the next meeting of our Finance and Property Committee.

2. Dr. Bernard Murphy

“To ask the Chief Executive to provide an update on discussions held with the Dublin Dental Hospital on the issuing of a Panel Number to that Hospital to enable it to treat adult medical card holders on the Dental Treatment Services Scheme.

Could he indicate whether it is agreed in principle to grant such a Panel Number and the time-frame in which this might be done, in order to provide greater access to routine dental treatment for adult medical card holders?”

Reply:

Discussions took place with the Dublin Dental Hospital prior to March 2000 with a view to including them in the Choice of Dentist Scheme. These discussions also centred on a number of related budgetary issues which required to be clarified before the Dublin Dental Hospital could be included in the Dental Treatment Services Scheme.

A meeting was arranged in January 2001 to progress this matter further. The meeting was cancelled by the Dublin Dental Hospital. It is intended to re-arrange this meeting in the near future.

3. Dr. Maurice Gueret

“Would the Chief Executive make a statement about a perception amongst many residents of the Firhouse area in Dublin 24 that there is an extremely high incidence of cancer amongst adults in this area? Could he outline how it might be ascertained what the mortality rate amongst young and middle-aged adults is in Firhouse? And could he advise how the Board might best address the concerns of residents on this matter?”

Reply:

The South Western Area Health Board is not aware of a perception amongst residents of the Firhouse area concerning “extremely high incidence of cancer amongst adults in this area”. However, the Board will make enquiries among healthcare professionals (i.e. Public Health Nurses, General Practitioners) in the local area to establish views relating to this matter.

After such local consultation, a further examination of the situation could be undertaken, including:-

- (a) defining the geographical area in question,
- (b) the type of cancer leading to concern,
- (c) the approximate number, age group and location of people with such cancers.

Cancer is well recognised as a condition of ageing. In the Eastern Region, cancer is the second most common cause of death after cardiovascular disease and it is the most common cause of death in the under 65 year age group. Lung cancer is the most common form of the disease within the Region with over 90% of lung cancer cases and a third of all cancer cases attributable to smoking.

In addition to smoking there are multiple factors involved in the aetiology of cancer. One would not expect a variety of different types of cancer where there was a perception of a local influence.

4. Deputy Jack Wall

“To ask that due consideration be given to rectifying the overcrowding situation at Naas General Hospital, and the possibilities of a similar nature occurring when the new development is completed. I ask that the Chief Executive investigate all of the relevant bed spaces within the remit of the South Western Area Health Board with a view to co-ordinating such spaces to the best possible usage by the relevant sections of the medical profession.”

Reply:

Naas General Hospital is currently undergoing a major redevelopment. This process in itself is putting additional pressure on the hospital and its staff.

The hospital currently has 95 beds and 13 observation places. The day hospital for older persons has 8 places and the day service can deal with up to 6 patients for minor procedures each day.

The Accident and Emergency Department continues to be very busy, with delays for some patients. At critical times the board has advertised this fact to the general public and encouraged the public to only attend when necessary and to visit their GP in the first instance where appropriate.

Some developments have been put in place to improve the ability of the hospital to cope with the demands. A GP liaison nurse has been appointed and the Board is currently recruiting a discharge planner to continue to ensure that effective and appropriate discharge plans are in place for all patients. The hospital is engaged in discussions with the Community Services General Manager to examine the totality of

needs in relation to the best use of existing step down and long stay beds and community supports to patients in the community and after discharge from hospital.

A number of additional consultant posts are planned for the hospital as follows:

- Two new temporary A&E consultants are to be in place in the summer of 2001.
- A new Consultant General Surgeon has been recruited and will be in post in July.
- Interviews are arranged to appoint a Consultant Physician with a special interest in Gastroenterology.
- A Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon with a three-session commitment will commence this month.

These appointments and developments will allow the hospital function more efficiently as we move forward into the new hospital.

The new hospital will have additional 32 beds. When the hospital was being designed a lot of emphasis was placed on the capacity for day procedures. The new facility will have capacity for 25 day procedures. The day hospital for older persons will have a capacity for 10 patients.

Based on current needs the new facility should be able to meet the needs of the area.

However, it is extremely important that all the major service providers for older persons work together in relation to best utilisation of the various types of beds available in the region. Our Board is working closely with the Adelaide and Meath Hospital, incorporating the National Children's Hospital, Tallaght (AMiNCH), St James's Hospital, and nursing homes throughout the region in this regard. Additional resources will need to be provided to improve the range of services and placements available. These issues are addressed in our Provider Plan.

The new hospital has been designed to allow an expansion factor of 30% including ward accommodation. The priority objective now is to complete the current development. Tendering procedures do not allow for additional capacity to be added before completion of the current development. If a future needs assessment indicates a need for additional capacity the expansion factor provided for in the design of the current development allows for this.

5. Dr. Kieran Harkin

“Could the Chief Executive please advise if any psychiatric, psychological or counselling services, in either the statutory or voluntary sector, are withheld from patients on the basis that they are on ‘psychoactive medication’ or methadone?”

Could the Chief Executive please make specific reference to counselling services to victims of sexual abuse who may be on psychoactive medication or methadone?”

Reply:

No psychiatric, psychological or counselling services provided by the South Western Area Health Board are withheld from patients on the basis that they are on ‘psychoactive medications’ or methadone. All people referred to such services are assessed and decisions taken with them on the most appropriate intervention.

The Adult Counselling Service of the South Western Area Health Board offers a dedicated counselling service to people who have experienced childhood abuse, i.e. physical, sexual, emotional, or neglect.

This service is not withheld from people because they are taking 'psychoactive' medication or methadone. Each person's situation is assessed at an initial meeting. A situation could arise where a person taking high doses of anti-depressant/antipsychoactive or other medications may find concentration/accessing feelings or thoughts difficult and, therefore, to engage in therapy at this time may not be appropriate for them. This would be reviewed at a later agreed time.

6. Ms. Anne Harris

"Could the Chief Executive please outline the plans to incorporate the home help service under the area health boards. How soon would he envisage this happening as there has already been an advertisement for such a position directly with the Northern Area Board?"

Reply:

Home Helps and Home Help organisers have traditionally been paid by voluntary organisations funded by the Area Health Boards. Discussions have been ongoing over the last few months between the Area Boards and IMPACT with a view to regularising the employment status of Home Helps.

The South Western Area Health Board has decided to establish a Working Group to oversee the process of bringing Home Helps working in the South Western Area Health Board into the direct employment of the Board.

38/2001

REPORT 3/2001 – PROVIDER PLAN 2001

The Chief Executive gave a presentation to members outlining the principal aspects of, and proposed developments in, our Board's Provider Plan 2001 [Report 3/2001 filed with official minute].

Members thanked the Chief Executive for his presentation.

Discussion followed to which the following members contributed:- Cllr. T. Cullen, Cllr. J. Reilly, Cllr. D. Tipping, Cllr. J. Wall, Cllr. M. Miley, Cllr. E. Byrne, Dr. M. Gueret, Sen. T. Ridge.

The Chief Executive responded as follows:-

Developments for West Wicklow: Proposals regarding developments for the West Wicklow area have been included in our Board's submission under the National Development Plan (NDP).

Infrastructural Developments: Future developments in both rural and urban areas will need to be "multi-functional". Ongoing discussions will be held with the Eastern Regional Health Authority (ERHA) regarding our Board's plans for major developments.

Consultation with Local Public Representatives: Arrangements are in place to enhance communication between General Managers and local public representatives.

Administrative Posts: The vast majority of the posts referred to in the Provider Plan are direct service personnel. Some of the administrative posts will also involve liaison with clients

Alzheimers Day Centre: This proposal is under discussion with the ERHA.

Housing Aid Scheme for the Elderly: A report regarding this scheme will be presented at a forthcoming Standing Committee meeting.

General Practice: Reports regarding the K Doc Initiative and GMS vacancies will be brought to forthcoming Standing Committee meetings.

Inter-Country Adoption: A report on inter-country adoption will be brought to members.

Homelessness: A report on homelessness, in conjunction with the Northern Area Health Board who have regional responsibility for this issue, will be brought to a forthcoming Standing Committee meeting.

Developments re (i) Mental Health Services, Clondalkin (ii) Tymon North: Proposals regarding the above developments have been included in our Board's submission under the National Development Plan (NDP).

Members noted the report.

39/2001

REPORT 4/2001 – SERVICES FOR OLDER PERSONS IN THE SOUTH WESTERN AREA HEALTH BOARD

This item was deferred.

40/2001

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

This item was deferred.

41/2001

PROGRESS REPORT FROM COMMUNITY SERVICES AND CONTINUING CARE STANDING COMMITTEE

On a proposal by Cllr. J. Reilly, seconded by Cllr. E. Byrne, the progress report from the Community Services and Continuing Care Standing Committee was adopted.

42/2001

PROGRESS REPORT FROM PROTOCOL & PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

This report was adopted at Chairman's Business.

43/2001
NOTICES OF MOTION

The motion tabled by Cllr. E. Byrne was deferred to the next Board Meeting.

44/2001
CORRESPONDENCE

The item of correspondence was noted by members.

45/2001
SCHEDULE OF VISITS FOR BOARD MEMBERS AND STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS (APRIL 2001)

The schedule of visits for Board Members and Standing Committee meetings for April 2001 which was circulated with the agenda papers was noted by members.

Members were informed that a meeting will be arranged between the three Area Chief Executives and the three Chairpersons of the Area Health Board Protocol and Procedures Committees to discuss the operation of service visits, amongst other matters.

46/2001
DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Tuesday, 1st May, 2001, at 6.00 p.m. in Baltinglass District Hospital, Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow.

The meeting concluded at 4.15 p.m.

CORRECT: P. DONNELLY
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CHAIRMAN