



EASTERN REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

**Minutes of proceedings of Board Meeting
held in the Board Room, Dr. Steevens' Hospital, Dublin 8
on Thursday 3rd May 2001 at 6.00 p.m.**

Present

Mr. P. Aspell	Cllr. C. Burke
Cllr. E. Byrne	Ald. I. Callely TD
Mr. M. Cowley	Cllr. Ann Devitt
Cllr. T. Cullen	Mr. J. Dolan
Cllr. P. Doran	Ald. Sen. J. Doyle
Mr. J. Fallon	Dr. K. Harkin
Ms. A. Harris	Dr. R. Hawkins
Ms. N. Harvey	Mr. P. Ledwidge
Cllr. C. McGrath	Mr. G. McGuire
Cllr. M. Miley	Dr. B. Murphy
Sen. S. O'Fearghail	Cllr. E. O'Brien
Cllr Dr W. O'Connell	Cllr C. O'Connor
Cllr. J. Reilly	Cllr Dr D.Fitzpatick
Cllr Andrew Doyle	Cllr D.Heney
Ms Maria Hoban	Dr J.Reilly
Dr J.Fennell	Ald. M. Mooney
Ms M.Hoban	

In the Chair

Alderman Ivor Callely TD

Apologies

Dr Maurice Gueret	Dr Marie Laffoy
Cllr Dermot Murray	Mr Larry Tuomey

In Attendance

Mr. Donal O Shea	Ms. Angela Fitzgerald	Mr. Martin Devine
Mr. Pat McLoughlin	Ms. Maureen Browne	Ms Angela Kerrigan
Dr. Brian O'Herlihy	Mr Philip Doyle	Ms Carol Ivory
Ms Maureen Cronin		
Ms Helen Stokes		

The Chairman read the Opening Prayer

01/05/36 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Agenda Item No. 1

- The Chairman complimented the gardener on the manner in which the grounds around Dr Steevens' Hospital are kept. It was agreed that a letter be sent to the gardener conveying the appreciation of the Board.
- Apologies for non attendance were received from Dr Marie Laffoy, Cllr Larry Tuomey and Dr Maurice Gueret.
- It was agreed that a letter of congratulations be sent to Dr M. Molloy on his appointment as Chairperson of the Irish Medical Organisation.
- The Protocol Committee will meet at 2.00pm on 8th May 2001 in the Boardroom, Dr Steevens' Hospital.
- The Continuing Care and Social Services Committee will meet at 10.00am on 9th May 2001 in the Boardroom, Dr Steevens' Hospital.
- The Acute Hospital and Primary Care Committee will meet at 6.00pm on 21st May 2001 in the Boardroom, Dr Steevens' Hospital.
- The Chairman informed Members of his recent visit to the Accident and Emergency Unit in the Mater. He asked that at the meeting of the Acute Hospital and Primary Care Committee scheduled for 21st May consideration be given to sending a delegation of members to visit the Mater Hospital.
- The Chairman said that he intended meeting the various groups of the Board to discuss the progress of Board business over the last 10 months and to identify other issues the Board might address. Mr Martin Devine to arrange.
- The Chairman proposed that a delegation of members visit Northern Ireland or the UK to look at the provision of services in those jurisdictions. Mr Martin Devine is to draw up a proposal and revert to the Protocol Committee at their next meeting.

01/05/37 Minutes of proceedings of meeting held on Thursday 5th April 2001
Agenda Item No. 2

The draft Minutes of the meeting held on 5th April 2001 (copy appended to the official minute), having being circulated, were proposed for adoption by Dr K. Harkin and seconded by Mr P. Aspell, and agreed.

The minutes of the Special meeting of 11th April 2001 (copy appended to the official minute), having been circulated, were proposed for adoption by Cllr James Reilly and seconded by Cllr Charlie O'Connor and agreed.

01/05/38 Questions to Chief Executive
Agenda Item No. 4

Questions agreed to be put by the Board to the Chief Executive on proposal of Ald. Sen. Joe Doyle and seconded by Cllr Eric Byrne.

3.1 Dr. Maurice Gueret

Would the Chief Executive make a statement outlining any improvements there have been in speeding up assessments for International Adoption in the ERHA within the last twelve months?

3.2 Dr. Maurice Gueret

Could the Chief Executive confirm that it is still the case that more couples are joining the queue for assessment that are been completed?

Reply

The following is a profile of activity and trends for the Inter Country Adoption Service provided by the South Western Area Health Board on behalf of the region. The new applications received during the period 31 March 2000 – 31 March 2001 were as follows:

31st March 2000	-	127
30th June 2000	-	91
30th September 2000	-	62
30th December 2000	-	90
31st March 2001	-	100

The average rate of new applications being received each quarter is 94.

Despite the continual flow of applicants wishing to avail of this service a number of the key indicators for its delivery are quite positive: the numbers waiting to commence assessment have decreased slightly and the projected waiting time for assessment has declined noticeably. In addition, practically all of the applicants

waiting to commence assessment that made an initial application in 1998 and 1999 have now progressed to the assessment stage of the process.

- Number of applicants waiting to commence 1st assessment decreased from *492 to 408* during the period 31st March 2000 and 31st March 2001.
- number of applicants waiting to commence 2nd assessment decreased from *83 to 56* during the period 31st March 2000 – 31st March 2001
- number of applications waiting to commence the assessment process received in 1998 has decreased from *109 to 0* during the period 30th June to 31 December 2000;
- Number of applications waiting to commence the assessment process received in 1999 has decreased from *245 to 2* during the period 30th June 2000 to 31st March 2001.
- The projected waiting time for commencement of 1st assessment has decreased from *36-42 months to 18 months* for the period 30 June 2000 – 31st March 2001.
- The projected waiting time for commencement of 2nd assessment has decreased from *18-20 months to 15 months* for the period 30th June 2000 – 31st March 2001.
- Number of WTE social work staff has increased from *8 to 12.5* during the period 31st March 2000 to 31st March 2001.

A number of improvements have been introduced into this service overall in the last twelve months. The key aim is to reduce the waiting time for commencement of assessment for those people who have made a foreign adoption application.

The main improvements are set out below:

1. Recruitment

The total number of social workers has increased from 11 in March 2000 to 15, broken down as follows:

- 1 Principal Social Worker
- 2 Team Leaders
- 7 Full Time Social Workers
- 5 Job Sharing Social Workers

This equates to 12.5 WTE social workers working within this service.

Recruitment and retention of staff in this area is a major challenge. Recruitment efforts are continuous with targeted drives being conducted through the national newspapers, health board web sites and the 'Crossroads' newsletter of the Irish

Association of Social Workers. Positions are always offered on a whole-time, part-time, job-sharing and flexible hour's basis.

2. Standardised Framework

Implementation of the new Standardised Framework commenced in November 2000 has had a significant effect on reducing the projected waiting time for commencement of assessment process to 18 months and 15 months respectively for 1st and 2nd assessments. This is a significant improvement on the waiting times at 30 June 2000 which stood at 36 to 42 months and 18 to 20 for 1st and 2nd assessment.

3. Second Time Applicants

A new system was introduced for 2nd assessments in early 2000. Essentially, applicants who have already been through the assessment process are fastracked and maintained on a separate waiting list and in so far as possible the social worker that conducted the 1st assessment is assigned to carry out the second assessment.

4. Applications

Since July 2000, application forms are posted on request. Prospective applicants are no longer required to attend an information session before they receive an application form. The South Western Area Health Board have confirmed that they are still experiencing difficulties as a result of delays by applicants in returning the necessary documentation. This has been addressed to some degree by reviewing the method by which the applicant is contacted and informed of the timescales for submission. The Board has also introduced a Garda waiver form that allows the applicant to proceed to the next stage without first having Garda clearance.

5. Premises

As of January 2001 this service has been re-located to a 'one-stop-shop' facility in Dartmouth House. The new facilities have already led to increased capacity for holding office based interviews thus reducing the time that social workers have spent in the past travelling to and from client visits.

6. Administrative Staff

Five new administrative personnel commenced work in this service during 2000. Each social worker has been allocated support with regard to administrative tasks. Effectively, this means that social workers are no longer carrying the administrative workload that they have in the past and are free to concentrate on assessments, post placement reports and other appropriate work.

7. Consultancy Review

The South Western Area Health Board has retained the services of a Consultancy firm to carry out a systematic review of the administrative process for this service and the findings of this review will be used to achieve improvements in the overall process for 2001. Phase one of this process is complete. The South

Western Area Health Board has indicated that it will make this report available to the International Adoption Association (IAA) in due course.

The progress described above is indicative of the ERHA's commitment to continually improving this service and addressing the key challenges such as:

- maintaining the progress made in reducing the waiting time for commencement of assessment;
- increasing the number of WTE social workers; and
- ensuring a smooth transition to the new Standardised Framework

3.3 Cllr. Catherine Byrne

Could the Authority give some statistics in relation to the number of deaths as a consequence of treatment by methadone for the drug addicts in the ERHA.

Reply

An examination of the Dublin Coroner's records in respect of inquests carried out in 1999 showed 45 deaths in which methadone was identified by toxicology. In one case only was methadone the only substance found. It is the norm for more than one substance to be found. Apart from opiates the most prevalent substances detected were benzodiazepines and alcohol. Of the 45 cases where methadone was found it was being prescribed as per guidelines in 15 cases.

It is not possible to state in any of these cases whether methadone, either prescribed or otherwise, was the cause of death. It was the norm for more than one substance to be identified by toxicology at death. In half the cases there were 3 or more substances identified. Apart from opiates, the most prevalent substances detected were benzodiazepines and alcohol.

3.4 Cllr Catherine Byrne

Would the Authority have any comment on the suitability of methadone as a treatment for addicts in recovery?

Reply

Methadone is the most widely used pharmaceutical treatment in opiate addiction, particularly at the initiation and stabilisation phases of treatment. In relation to the recovery phase, some addicts opt to stay on methadone while undergoing rehabilitation programmes and others opt for detoxification. The treatment of choice for any individual at this stage is a matter between the drug taker themselves, their doctor and other members of the care team. Two independent evaluations of the drug treatment services in the Eastern Region have endorsed the approach being taken. The recently established National Advisory Committee on Drugs will be advising Government on any new approaches deemed necessary.

3.5 Dr Barney Murphy

"To ask the Chief Executive if the Project Team for the Temple Street Hospital Development has any arrangements to ensure that facilities and services for dental care are included in the plans for the new Hospital. Could he also indicate whether representation from the Dublin Dental School and Hospital is included in the Project Team?"

Reply

Facilities for a dental service including two dental surgeons and associated rooms are provided for in the development brief of the new hospital. While the Dublin Dental Hospital is not directly represented on the Project Team, I am assured that discussions have taken place and are taking place with the Dental Hospital regarding the development of dental services in the context of both the current hospital and of the new Mater/Temple Street joint hospital project.

01/05/39 Disposal of Property at St James's Hospital Site – Report 10/01
Agenda Item No.5

The Chief Executive presented Report No. 10/01- Disposal of Queen Mary Building, James Street, Dublin 8 (copy appended to the official minute) which recommended the disposal of this property on the terms and conditions outlined in the Notice (copy appended to the official minute).

There was a debate on the issue to which the following members contributed:- Alderman Ivor Callely T.D., Cllr E. O'Brien, Mr G. McGuire, Dr B. Murphy, Cllr J. Reilly, Cllr C. Burke, and Cllr E. Byrne. During the debate concern was expressed that the services currently being run from the Queen Mary Building would not be properly re-accommodated in the event that the Board agreed to the disposal of the property.

In responding to the debate, Mr O Shea assured the Board that, in the event that the disposal of the property was agreed, he would ensure that the property would not be disposed of or handed over until all the services had been suitably re-accommodated in other premises.

Cllr E. O'Brien proposed that the Queen Mary Building, James Street, Dublin 8 be disposed of in accordance with the terms and conditions outlined in the Notice and on the understanding that the property would not be disposed of until the services currently accommodated there are suitably accommodated elsewhere. Cllr. Jim Reilly seconded the proposal and the Board, by resolution, agreed the proposal.

01/05/40 Disposal of Property at Charles Street West – Report 11/01

Agenda Item No.6

The Chief Executive presented Report No. 11/01- Disposal of 5, Charles Street West (copy appended to the official minute) which recommended the disposal of this property on the terms and conditions outlined in the Notice (copy appended to the official minute).

In the course of the debate on the issue, Cllr D. Fitzpatrick advised the Board that this was the first radiotherapy building built by the State and that there is a plaque commemorating the history of the building. It was proposed by Cllr Fitzpatrick and seconded by the Chairman that the plaque be removed from the building before its disposal. The Board agreed that the plaque be archived.

In the course of the debate the following issues were raised:-

- Progress on the development at Parkgate Street.
- It was suggested that when properties were being put before the Board for disposal that the report include the area of the building and a map detailing the location.

In responding to the debate Mr O Shea said that there would be no difficulty in providing the area of the buildings and the location map. He stated that a report would be given to the Continuing Care and Social Services Committee on the progress of the development at Parkgate Street.

Cllr E. Byrne proposed that the property at Charles Street West be disposed of in accordance with the terms and conditions outlined in the Notice. Cllr. C. Burke seconded the proposal and the Board, by resolution, agreed the proposal.

01/05/41 Report on Introduction of the Euro – Report 12/01

Agenda Item No.7

Report No. 12/01 – Report on the introduction of the Euro (copy appended to the official minute) was moved by Cllr Joe Doyle and seconded by Cllr Jim Reilly. The Report was noted.

01/05/42 Maternity Services in the Eastern Region – Report No. 14/01

Agenda Item No.8

The Chief Executive presented Report No. 14/01 – Maternity Services in the Eastern Region. Following the presentation of the report, there was a debate to which the following members contributed:- Alderman Ivor Callely T.D., Dr R. Hawkins, Alderman Sen. Doyle, Cllr E.Byrne, and Ms M. Hoban.

During the debate on the Report the following issues were raised:-

- The ethics of particular institutions in relation to the provision of particular medical procedures.
- New discharge times for mothers and babies and the effects this may be having on lower socio-economic groups.

In responding to the debate, the Chief Executive explained that under the 1999 Act, the ERHA is required to have regard to the right of voluntary bodies who provide services in accordance with arrangements made under section 10 of that Act to manage their own affairs in accordance with their independent ethos and traditions. In relation to the effect of early discharges, the Chief Executive undertook to provide the necessary information to Cllr Hoban.

01/05/43 Notice of Motion
Agenda Item No.9

9.1 Cllr Don Tipping & Cllr Jane Dillion Byrne

“The ERHA hereby resolves to fully support the granting of a medical card to all persons over 70 years of age and sees this as a stepping stone to providing a health service that treats all persons equally and looks forward to a fully funded health service which does not require payment by the individual at point of seeking to avail of the service”.

It was proposed by Cllr Eric Byrne, seconded by Alderman I. Callely and agreed, that, in the absence of Cllr D. Tipping and Cllr J. Dillon Byrne, consideration of the motion be deferred.

9.2 Dr Kieran Harkin & Ms Noeleen Harvey

“That the ERHA recognises the importance of having private facilities available for patients who are obliged to ingest their medication under the direct supervision of a community pharmacist and would, through the Area Health Boards, encourage facilitate and support pharmacists to provide such facilities”.

Ms Noeleen Harvey moved and spoke to the motion. The following members spoke in support of the motion:- Ms N. Harvey, Dr K.Harkin and Cllr E. Byrne. The motion was seconded by Dr K. Harkin and agreed. In response, Mr Pat McLoughlin, Director of Planning and Commissioning undertook to progress the matter with the Area Boards and the Department of Health and Children.

01/05/44 Chief Executive's Report

Agenda Item No. 10

The Chief Executive's Report was circulated (copy appended to the Official Minute).

The Report dealt with the following items:-

- Restrictions on the sale of medicinal products containing Paracetamol
- The Consolidated Annual Financial Statements
- The establishment of an Internal Audit Committee
- Acute Hospital Activity
- Out Lady's Hospital Crumlin
- Mater Hospital/Chemotherapy Treatments
- Specialist Paediatric Surgery
- Radiotherapy Services
- Analysis of Census
- Annual Report of Ombudsman 2000
- Homeless Agency Launch
- New Drug Treatment Centre in Darndale
- Open Day at Soilse
- Food Safety information Programme
- Retirement of Clinical Director of Tallaght/St. Loman's Psychiatric Service.

The Chairman paid tribute to Dr Dermot Walsh who was retiring from his post as Clinical Director of the Tallaght/St Loman's psychiatric service at the end of April. It was agreed that the Chief Executive would write to Dr Walsh on behalf of the Board and wish him well on his retirement.

In the course of the debate on the CEO's Report to which the following members contributed:- Cllr E. Byrne, Cllr J. Doyle, Mr G. McGuire, Mr M. Cowley, Dr K. Harkin and Dr. R. Hawkins the following issues were raised:-

- Clarification of the role of the CEO in dealing with specialist paediatric surgery
- A request that the Director of Youth Homelessness make a presentation to the Continuing Care and Social Services Committee in June.
- Price control and the Paracetamol Regulations.

In responding to the issues raised, the Chief Executive clarified that while specialist paediatric surgery is a national speciality and a matter for the Department of Health and Children, he had been asked specifically to play a role in bringing together the three Children's Hospitals in order to reach consensus on the issue.

In relation to the paracetamol regulations the Chief Executive confirmed that there was no price control in respect of the cost of paracetamol in the Regulations.

The Chief Executive proposed to ask the Director of Homelessness of the ERHA to make a presentation to the next meeting of the Continuing Care and Social Services Committee.

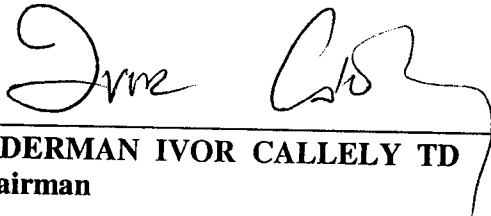
It was proposed by Cllr Joe Doyle and seconded by Cllr Jim Reilly that the CEO's report, as circulated, be noted.

01/05/45 Date & Time of Next Meeting
Agenda Item No. 11

The date and time of the next meeting of the Authority was agreed for Thursday 7th June 2001 at 6.00 p.m. in the Board Room, Dr. Steevens' Hospital.

The meeting concluded at 8.00 p.m.

CORRECT
Donal O Shea
Chief Executive



ALDERMAN IVOR CALLELY TD
Chairman

DATE