

**EASTERN REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY**

**Minutes of proceedings of Board Meeting  
held in the Board Room, Dr. Steevens' Hospital, Dublin 8  
on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2001 at 6.00 p.m.**

*Present*

Mr Patrick Aspell	Ms Ann Harris
Dr Siobhan Barry	Ms Noeleen Harvey
Mr Gerard Brady	Dr Marie Laffoy
Cllr Christy Burke	Mr Paul Ledwidge
Cllr. Laurence Butler	Mr Gerry McGuire
Cllr. Catherine Byrne	Cllr. Martin Miley
Cllr. Eric Byrne	Ald. Mary Mooney
Cllr. Maria Corrigan	Dr. Bernard Murphy
Cllr. Tommy Cullen	Cllr. Eamonn O'Brien
Cllr. Anne Devitt	Cllr. Dr William O'Connell
Cllr. Jane Dillion-Byrne	Cllr. Charles O'Connor
Cllr. Pat Doran	Cllr. Michael O'Donovan
Ald. Sen. Joe Doyle	Cllr. James Reilly
Cllr. Andrew Doyle	Sen. Therese Ridge
Mr Joe Fallon	Cllr. Don Tipping
Cllr. Dr. Dermot Fitzpatrick	Mr Larry Twomey
Cllr. Tony Fox	
Dr Maurice Gueret	
Dr Kieran Harkin	

*In the Chair*

Alderman Ivor Callely TD

*Apologies*

Mr Martin Cowley   Ms Maria Hoban   Cllr. Colm McGrath   Dr. James Reilly

*In Attendance*

Mr. Pat McLoughlin	Ms. Maureen Browne	Ms Fionnuala Duffy
Dr. B. O'Herlihy	Mr Brian Daly	Ms Mo Flynn
Mr Alastair Graham	Ms Carol Ivory	Ms Helen Stokes

## **01/11/82 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

### ***Agenda Item No. 1***

The Chairman advised the Board that apologies for non attendance were received from Mr Martin Cowley, Ms Maria Hoban, Cllr. Colm McGrath and Dr. James Reilly.

He notified the Board of the dates and times of the next meetings of the Standing Committees and the Finance and Property Committee.

The Chairman advised members that the ordinary December meeting of the Board will take place on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2001 at 6:00pm. The Christmas meeting and dinner will be held on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2001 in Stewarts Hospital, Palmerstown.

## **01/11/83 Minutes of proceedings of meeting held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2001 and minutes of special meeting held on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2001**

### ***Agenda Item No. 2***

The draft Minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2001 (*copy appended to the official minute*) and the draft Minutes of the special meeting held on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2001 (*copy appended to the official minute*), having being circulated, were proposed for adoption by Cllr C O' Connor, seconded by Cllr E O Brien, and agreed.

## **01/11/84 Questions to Chief Executive**

### ***Agenda Item No.3***

Questions agreed to be put by the Board to the Deputy Chief Executive on proposal of Cllr C O' Connor and seconded by Cllr J Reilly.

#### **3.1 Dr Siobhan Barry**

**“Could the CEO comment on the provision of, access to, and adequacy of secure beds for disturbed psychiatric patients in the region”**

#### **Reply**

St. Brendan's Hospital is designated under the Mental Treatment Act 1945 as the district mental hospital and, consequently, provides a regional function for patients requiring treatment and management for disturbed behaviour. This is behaviour which is deemed clinically not capable of being managed at the acute admission units within the particular care area, and, consequently, access is sought, via the clinician, for admission to one of either the 27 male or 27 female beds in the psychiatric intensive care units.

The unit has experienced recent difficulties with blocked beds due to an increase in referrals from the Central Mental Hospital, catchment area services, homeless and non-district patients, and difficulties encountered in re-locating patients from the unit to the various services following the completion of appropriate risk assessment reviews. Further difficulties are experienced with the long-term

placement of intermittently disturbed patients in the unit. Difficulties are compounded by the current shortage of qualified psychiatric nurses in all areas.

The Northern Area Health Board has held discussions with the other two Area Health Boards in the region to address the issue of blockages in the system in the short-term. Agreement has been reached on a phased move of risk-assessed patients to more appropriate care environments and thus freeing up capacity in the unit.

The long-term plan for services for the disturbed mentally ill will require considerable capital and infrastructural investment to re-orientate services on the St. Brendan's Hospital campus site and the development of self-sufficient secure facilities in each of the three Area Health Boards.

It is the intention of the Northern Area Health Board to develop a secure unit for our Board on the St. Brendan's Hospital site, subject to the required funding being made available. It is also planned to develop a range of enhanced catchment area services to support this secure unit.

The Department of Health and Children, in recognition of the changing treatment environment following publication of the report on the development of psychiatric services, *Planning for the Future* (1984), have produced a document which deals with provision for the management of disturbed behaviour within the Mental Health services.

Each Area Health Board will develop its own intensive care facilities on a phased basis, as part of the National Development Plan. Each of the three Area Health Boards in the eastern region have planned for such a facility and the Authority is in consultation with the Department of Health and Children regarding the allocation of capital for these developments.

### **3.2 Dr. Maurice Gueret**

**“Would the CEO outlined why it continues to be the policy and practice in the ERHA area for psychiatric clinics to dispense free medication to all patients, whilst prescriptions for psychiatric medications issued by GPs must be paid for by non- medical card holders? Does he agree that such practices encourage lifelong attendance at psychiatric clinics, foster patients dependency and block efforts to support combined care?”**

#### **Reply**

The situation of dispensing free psychiatric medication to all people attending psychiatric services is provided under the Health Act 1970 (section 56(1) and (2)). This enables health boards to provide outpatient services including provision of psychiatric drugs and medicines free of charge to psychiatric patients. The Health Act explicitly states that free services can be made to limited eligibility persons as well as full eligibility persons (medical card holders).

This produces a different situation to that pertaining to other health services. In the rest of the health service, patients without medical cards pay for their own drug requirements unless provided directly by hospitals to in-patients. Expenditure is subject to support under the different Drug Payment Scheme.

The Authority acknowledges that this system as it emerged largely by-passed the role of the general practitioner who is central to prescribing in the general health services. However, as this system grew gradually from the de-institutionalisation process, the concern was to ensure compliance with medication taking and incurring a cost could have contributed to patients stopping medication.

In July 2001 a report that was commissioned by the former Eastern Health Board's Programme for Mental Health Services, titled "Organisational Structure for the Provision of Psychiatric Drugs in the East Region Health Authority Review and Recommendations" was completed and circulated to each of the three Area Health Boards. This report was commissioned originally because the psychiatric services acknowledged that it acted as a method of maintaining life long attendances at psychiatric clinics.

This report was submitted to the Authority in 19<sup>th</sup> October 2001.

The Authority is at present examining the recommendations and will bring forward a report on same to the next Continuing Care & Social Services Committee meeting of the Board.

### **3.3.Dr. Siobhan Barry**

**Re: The ERHA Report No. 23/01 - Update on Child Care Policy  
Could the CEO comment on the West Lodge emergency/assessment unit referred to in this report and indicate if this facility will be**

- **A secure or a step down unit?**
- **Staffed by employees of the SWAHB?**
- **Registered and subject to the Social Services Inspectorate?**

#### **Reply**

- West Lodge was purchased as a residential childcare facility.
- There are no plans to operate it as a secure facility
- There are currently discussions ongoing between the three Area Health Boards and the ERHA as to whether the facility will be a regional step down facility or whether it will provide a service for children out of home in SWAHB.
- All residential childcare centres are subject to inspection by the Social Services Inspectorate the timing of which is a matter for the Inspectorate.

**01/11/85 Matters for mention**

*Agenda Item No.4*

There were no matters for mention.

**01/11/86 Disposal of property at Grove Park, Celbridge, Co Kildare (Report No. 25/01)**

*Agenda Item No.5*

The Deputy Chief Executive presented Report No. 25/01 – Disposal of property at Grove Park, Celbridge, Co Kildare (*copy appended to the official minute*). On the proposal of Ald Sen J Doyle, seconded by Cllr J Reilly, the Board resolved unanimously that the land be transferred to the Celbridge Mental Health Housing Association by way of 250 year lease on condition that at least 8 of the 12 housing units built on the site would be made available to the Mental Health Services of the South Western Area Health Board.

**01/11/87 Review of Services for Older Persons (Report No. 26/01) and presentation.**

*Agenda Item No.6*

The Deputy Chief Executive introduced Report No. 26/01 – Review of Services for Older Persons (*copy appended to the official minute*) and Ms Mo Flynn, Service Planner made a presentation to the members. Following the presentation there was a lengthy debate to which the following members contributed:- the Chairman, Dr S Barry, Dr R Harkin, Cllr L Butler, Cllr J Reilly, Cllr T Ridge, Mr J Fallon, Dr M Laffoy, Ald Sen J Doyle, Cllr M O Donovan, Cllr P Doran, Ms A Harris and Mr G Brady.

On the proposal of Cllr C Burke, seconded by Mr L Tuomey, it was agreed to refer the report for further consideration at the next meeting of the Continuing Care and Social Services Committee.

**01/11/88 Chief Executive's Report**

*Agenda Item No.7*

The Chief Executive's Report (*copy appended to the official minute*) was circulated. The Report dealt with the following items.

- National Youth Homelessness Strategy
- Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children
- Anthrax Update
- Recent Conference "Legislating for a Tobacco Free Society"
- Cervical Cytology
- Pennies from Heaven
- New Sensory Garden at Newcastle Hospital
- Official opening of new Postgraduate Centre in Tallaght Hospital
- Women's Health Project 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

- Recent publications.

On the proposal of Ald Sen J Doyle, seconded by the Cllr L Butler, the Chief Executive's Report as circulated was noted.

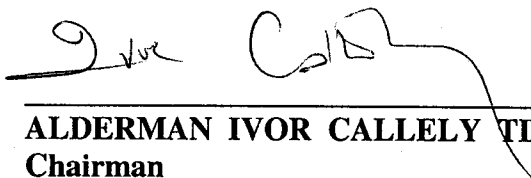
**01/11/89      Date and Time of Next Meeting**

*Agenda Item No.9*

The date and time of the next meeting was agreed for Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2001 at 6.00pm in the Board Room, Dr Steevens' Hospital.

The meeting concluded at 7:40pm.

**CORRECT**  
**Donal O Shea**  
**Chief Executive**

  
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**ALDERMAN IVOR CALLELY TD**  
**Chairman**

6-12-01  
**DATE**