



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

HSE Safety and Quality Committee Meeting

Minutes

A meeting of the HSE Safety and Quality Committee was held on Wednesday, 29 April 2020 at 10.00am via teleconference

Committee Members Present: Prof Deirdre Madden (Chair), Prof Fergus O’Kelly, Ms Anne Carrigy, Dr Cathal O’Keeffe, Ms Margaret Murphy

Board Members: Mr Brendan Lenihan, Ms Fiona Ross, Dr Sarah Mc Loughlin

HSE Executive Attendance: Dr Colm Henry, Mr. Patrick Lynch, Dr Philip Crowley, Ms. Niamh Drew, Ms. Amy Phillips

Apologies: Ms Yvonne Traynor, Dr Chris Luke,

1. Introduction and Chairperson’s Remarks

D.Madden took the Chair and welcomed members to the meeting of the Committee.

Minutes of the Meeting on 19th February 2020 were approved

No conflict of interest was declared.

The Chair welcomed members of the executive to the meeting and the three Board members.

2 COVID-19

Dr Henry and Dr Crowley presented a paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting on the impact of COVID 19 on usual services and plan for service continuity during the Covid -19 pandemic. The paper provided an overview of the scale of the current challenge facing the Irish health system from the COVID-19. The COVID 19 response has required an unprecedented response and it was agreed that disruption to usual health care delivery is inevitable considering how many new services have been established at incredible speed such as community testing centres, community assessment clinics, new supports for nursing homes, new isolation facilities and increased ICU

capacity. It was also noted that clinical practice has evolved rapidly with many services successfully consulting with patients by telephone and video calls including specialist clinics and GP care.

The Committee discussed the aspects of the paper that pose a risk for business as usual. In particular it noted the decrease in ED and outpatient attendance, day case and inpatient services, and the increase in waiting lists (examples included the increased waiting list for GI endoscopy), the redeployment of staff, unprecedented demands on health care arising from Covid 19, rates of worker illness, fear of contracting the virus as a result of attending health service facilities and the significant public health measures all of which create a unique set of challenges for the health service.

The CCO informed the Committee that that the recovery from COVID-19 will not be straightforward, however there is a programme of work in place to address the Continuity of System Wide Healthcare Services which has been commissioned by the CEO and is being led by the CCO and the Chief Operations Officer. The primary goal of the programme will be the protection of the health of the population in the short and long term through the gradual re-introduction of non COVID services while maintaining the ability to manage possible future surges of COVID 19. There will be a road map for acute hospitals which will set out the clinical prioritisation for services, together with a clear plan for the work that can transfer to private hospitals. The Committee requested that a copy of the terms of reference for this work be circulated to the Committee and that this will be an agenda item for the next Committee meeting.

The Committee highlighted that while the immediate priority lies with the hospital system, community services should also be a priority for returning to business as usual. The CCO confirmed that planning for the return to normal services in the community is also underway.

The Committee also questioned and sought further clarifications with regards to private hospitals being COVID-19 free and queried if public and private waiting lists would be merged. The CCO advised that private hospitals will engage with public activity only.

The Committee also sought clarification on the delivery of outpatient care in private hospitals and private consultants who haven't signed the new contract. The CCO confirmed that this is also being considered.

The Committee discussed the risks associated with returning to 'business as usual' and noted that to date, much public health messaging regarding COVID-19 has focused on social distancing, hand hygiene, PPE for health care workers, and the need for increased testing. They did acknowledge that the CEO in his weekly briefings and other HSE personnel have sought to encourage people,

particularly those with time critical conditions to continue to attend their GPs and emergency departments when required. The Committee recommended that a wider communication strategy be put in place to encourage those most in need of care to seek healthcare services as usual and to outline the HSE's plan for returning to 'business as usual'.

The Committee members commended the CCO, his team and management across the HSE for their hard work and dedication during the COVID-19 response to date and their work on the paper that was presented

3. Risk Management

P Lynch presented this item to the Committee.

The Committee members discussed a number of potential service and health related risk areas many of which had been highlighted under the previous agenda item, such as the impact of COVID 19 on long term residential care, return to normal services and the risk of exposure to COVID 19 amongst health service staff. The financial risks to the health service, the budgetary pressures faced many Section 39 agencies and the impact of on-going physical distancing requirements in health facilities was also discussed.

The Committee raised a query in relation to the early registration of medical graduates and if this type of arrangement could be applied to nursing students also.

P. Lynch updated the Committee on the work underway to review the HSE's Corporate Risk Register. This will involve assessing the risks emerging directly as a result of COVID 19 and the impact of COVID 19 on all the other corporate risks.

12. Any Other Business

Date of Next Meeting 2020 *tbc*.

The meeting concluded at 12.05 pm

Signed: Deirdre Madden

Deirdre Madden
Chairperson

24/11/20

Date

