

General Motions 2019 Update

VALUING DOCTORS

19/01 The IMO calls on the HSE, Department of Health, Department of Finance, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the cabinet to value doctors and to treat them fairly throughout their careers from medical student to retirement.

Update: the IMO through its advocacy, submissions and media activities raised the issues regarding the need for the State to properly value doctors so as to avoid the increasing rise in emigration and poor morale amongst the profession.

CLIMATE CHANGE/ ENVIRONMENTAL

19/02 The IMO calls on the Government to incentivise sustainable and to penalise unsustainable energy provision and to mandate Government Departments and Agencies to prioritise the procurement of sustainable energy services urgently, in line with Ireland's targets under COP21 for 2020.

Update: The IMO wrote to the Minister for Health, the Minister for Communications Climate Action and the Environment and the Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure regarding this motion. The IMO will continue to advocate for sustainable energy provision.

19/03 The IMO calls on the Government to increase investment in cycling and walking to 20% of the transport budget, in line with the recommendations by UNEP, and towards achieving sustainable development goals 3,7,11 and 13, air quality benefits, climate change mitigation and the benefits to health of active transport.

Update: The Department of Health responded highlighting a number of policies and initiatives that have been launched and are being implemented under the Healthy Ireland Framework, including the National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP) and the Obesity Policy and Action Plan (OPAP).

The *Get Ireland Active – the National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland (NPAP)*

“implementation measures relating to walking and cycling that are supported by the Department of Health and the HSE include the following:

- The Healthy Ireland Fund has been allocated €5m in 2017, 2018 and 2019. Funding is supplied through two strands; Strand 1 supports actions delivered through Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) and Children's and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSCs) at local level and Strand 2 funds national actions through Sport Ireland and via support for the Active Schools Flag programme. Both Strands provide support for walking and cycling at local and national levels.

- funding to Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs), to provide local supports for walking, cycling. Examples include the Men on the Move and Women on Wheels programmes in addition to community walking programmes
- The National Healthy Cities and Counties Network of Ireland (HCCNI) is developing a structure and supports to implement Healthy Ireland at local level.
- Continued expansion of community walking groups under a new Get Ireland Walking (GIW) Strategy, supported by the Healthy Ireland Fund.
- Cycling received additional support from the Healthy Ireland and Dormant Accounts Fund in 2017 and 2018, enabling the commencement of work required to establish a 'Get Ireland Cycling' initiative using a multi-agency approach similar to that used for Get Ireland Walking.
- Support for the European Week of Sport and Physical Activity (
- The Department, through the Healthy Ireland Fund, is working with the HSE to explore the use of Social Prescribing
- The Men's Shed Walking Initiative
- An Active School Walkway Pack was developed and launched by GIW in partnership with Active School Flag for Active School Week, 2018.

The Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport also responded highlighting investment in this area as follows:

Funding of €40m for 10 new Greenways projects across 9 counties announced on 21st June 2019.

A further €135m capital funding is allocated over this period for investment in Sustainable Urban Transport projects, and these include projects that will provide either direct or indirect improvements for urban cycling.

, investment of approximately €750m on the BusConnects Programme during the same period will deliver a transformative investment package that will finance new and expanded bus routes, greatly improving bus access. This includes over 200km of new or improved cycle lanes in the Dublin region, segregated where possible.

In addition to all the above, Government has also made additional money available for cycling projects through both the Urban and Rural Regeneration and Development Funds which form part of Project Ireland 2040.

“My Department has made significant investments in behavioural change programmes such as the Green Schools Travel programme, the Smarter Travel Workplace and Campus programme and the Cycle Right Training programme which aims to provide cycling training to 25,000 school children this year. My Department also funds and supports Bike Week which is a celebration and promotion of all that is great about bikes and cycling, last year over 600 events took place nationwide with over 40,000 participants.

My Department continues to work with all stakeholders, including the RSA, with the aim of providing a safe infrastructure for all cyclists. I envisage that all these substantial investments and measures will allow us to further increase the numbers cycling safely, thereby easing congestion, improving public health and enhancing the liveability and business activity in our cities.”

NUTRITION

19/04 The IMO calls on the Government to prioritise access to healthy, sustainable and culturally appropriate food at all Government funded facilities, including healthcare facilities, taking consideration of the issues raised in the EAT Lancet Planetary Health Diet.

Update: The IMO received the following response from the Health and Well-being Programme in the Department of Health

Healthy Ireland, Department of Health uses the Food Pyramid as a food selection guide and Government workplaces, Healthcare facilities and schools are recommended to follow these guidelines.

The main focus of the EAT Lancet Planetary Health Diet is less reliance on meat and including more plant foods in the diet.

Following the servings recommended from the Vegetables, salad and fruit shelf of the Food Pyramid and from the Wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice will help achieve this.

In particular, choosing more plant-based protein choices from the Meat poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts shelf, i.e. more pulses, nuts and seeds, will help towards a more sustainable, healthy diet.

Specific examples of standards using the Food Pyramid are the Healthy Ireland Nutrition Standards for School Meals - developed initially for the DEIS School Meals Scheme but applicable to all schools and the HSE/ Healthy Ireland Food, Nutrition and Hydration Policy in Acute Hospitals.

ADDICTION SERVICES

19/05 This meeting calls on the HSE to ensure that its clinical guidelines for the treatment of opiate users are adequately peer reviewed and submitted to the National Clinical Effectiveness Committee without delay.

19/06 This meeting calls on the HSE to provide evidence-based and accessible treatment options for patients suffering from benzodiazepine dependence.

19/07 This meeting supports the principle that drug treatment is evidence-based and characterised by a culture of respect and dignity and the rights of patients to participate fully in their treatment.

Update: The IMO has written to the HSE regarding these motions and continues to advocate for a best-practice addiction programme.

VACCINES

19/08 The IMO calls on the Minister for Health and the HSE to provide sufficient resources for the extension of the HPV Vaccination Programme in the 2019/20 School Year in order to achieve optimal uptake of this cancer preventing vaccine.

Update: The IMO agreed to the extension of the HPV Vaccine to boys, starting in September 2019 following the allocation of additional medical, nursing and administrative supports for this programme. The vaccine is provided in 2 stages, and the first stage of delivery has been completed with the next phase to commence in 2020. The extension is welcome but there remains some issues in relation to the recruitment of the promised additional staff.

CERVICAL CHECK

19/09 This AGM supports the Cervical Check Screening Programme and encourages all women to continue to participate in screening as it saves lives.

19/10 The IMO calls on the HSE and the Department of Health to redouble their efforts in promoting the value of screening programmes in terms of saving lives while clearly explaining the inherent limitations of such programmes

Update General Motions 19/09 and 19/10: The IMO received the following response from the Department of Health, Population Health Systems Unit

A recommendation contained within the 'Scallan Report into the CervicalCheck Screening Programme (September 2018)' was that a National Screening Committee should be constituted to advise the Department of Health and the Minister on all new proposals for screening and revisions to current programmes.

The Committee will provide independent expert advice when it comes to considering population-based screening programmes in Ireland. In accordance with best practice and in order to ensure appropriate use of finite resources, the NSC - Ireland will:

- Effectively implement an agreed methodology for accepting applications to consider new or revisions to existing population screening programmes;
- Agree and implement a prioritisation process for the consideration of new or revised population screening programmes;
- Develop and implement a robust and transparent system to evaluate potential population-based screening programmes against a set of internationally recognised criteria;
- Clearly communicate the recommendations and the reasoning to the Department of Health, stakeholders and the public on the outcomes of deliberations.

By combining the work of the Committee with the strong support of the medical profession through the RCPI, RCSI and the ICGP and a vigorous campaign by the Department of Health it will do much to regain and sustain public trust and confidence in population health screening in Ireland.

In June 2019, the Minister for Health appointed Prof Niall O'Higgins as Chair of the National Screening Committee – Ireland.

SOCIAL MEDIA

19/11 The IMO calls on the Government to ensure that all "social media" companies and affiliates based in the Republic of Ireland are treated no less honourably than publishing companies in regards to regulations on the protection of children in the new proposed online safety act..

19/12 The IMO calls on the Government to establish statutory guidelines for "social media" companies and affiliates based in the Republic of Ireland in regards to Suicide Prevention and identification of vulnerable adults.

Update General Motions 19/11 & 19/12: The IMO wrote to the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and the Environment regarding these motions, but received no response. The new On-line Safety Bill was due to be published in early 2020 but has yet to be published.

NEW REGULATIONS IN HEALTHCARE

19/14 The IMO calls on the Government to ensure that when introducing any new regulation into the health sector that adequate engagement with the medical profession has taken place and it is accompanied by an impact statement on the benefits and negative effects, including resource implications to the healthcare system.

Update: The IMO wrote to the Minister for Health regarding this motion.

SPORTS FACILITIES

19/15 The IMO calls on Government to review investment in sports facilities and sporting organisations at non elite level, non-competitive level, community and school level to improve participation levels in exercise and in the overall health of society.

Update: The IMO received the following response from the Health and Well-being Programme in the Department of Health

Healthy Ireland has worked together with Sport Ireland at national level to provide supports to various National Governing Bodies of Sport and other organisations providing physical activity interventions. Healthy Ireland has also been working with DES to support physical education and physical activity in schools. Actions include the following:

- Support for Get Ireland Walking, Get Ireland Cycling, the European Week of Sport and others as detailed above
- Support for the Active Shool Flag (ASF) programme, in partnership with the Department of Education and Skills.
- Support for Athletics Ireland in running the Daily Mile programme in participating schools.
- Providing additional support to the NCCA in developing an app, Phyz, to support the new Senior Cycle PE Framework in post-primary schools
- The Get Ireland Swimming initiative received additional support from the Healthy Ireland and Dormant Accounts Fund in 2017 and 2018,
- The Healthy Ireland Fund, Healthy Cities and Counties Network, local authorities, the HSE, LSPs, LCDCs and CYPSCs all variously support local actions that are intended to raise population activity and participation levels as part of supporting improved national health and wellbeing

It should be noted that the National Sports Policy (NSP), which is led by DTTAS, lists 3 high level goals, which include improved capacity and increased participation as well as more excellence.

Implementation of the NSP is overseen by a Sports Leadership Group on which the Department of Health and Healthy Ireland are represented. Implementation of the NSP is co-ordinated with that of the NPAP

A key NSP target is to increase overall participation in sport from 43% to 50% of the population by 2027. In tandem with these goals and targets, the Government has indicated that it plans to increase funding for sport from €112m in 2018 to €220m in 2027. The NSP commits to sustained and enhanced investment in sports facilities.

The Sports Capital Programme and other funds for larger regional and national sports facilities are a matter for DTTAS and Sport Ireland.

The IMO also received the following response from the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport.

The Sports Capital Programme (SCP) is the Government's primary method of providing support to sports clubs and organisations for capital projects. It allocates funding to voluntary, sporting and community organisations for the provision of sports and recreational facilities throughout the country. Almost 12,000 projects have benefitted from sports capital funding since 1998, bringing the total allocations in that time to almost €1 billion. Sports capital funding has supported improvements in the quality and quantity of sporting facilities in virtually every village, town and city in the country. The SCP continues to promote the development of a wide range of sports and recreational facilities around the country to improve and increase participation for people of all ages.

The 2018 round of the Sports Capital Programme received a record 2,337 applications. Equipment only allocations with a value of €9.8m were announced in May this year. The remaining applications for capital works are currently under assessment and it is hoped to make these allocations later this year.

Increasing participation is the mainstay of the National Sports Policy launched in July 2018 with every citizen engaging regularly in some form of sport and physical activity, irrespective of their age, economic or social circumstances, their ethnic background or their physical capabilities. The policy contains a commitment to run the SCP on an annual basis to fund smaller-scale facilities targeting increased participation and improved participation experiences throughout the population.

DATA FOR HEALTH SERVICE PLANNING

19/16 This AGM calls on the Minister for Health, the Department of Health and the HSE to review the rules and methodology around the gathering of data for the HIPE system so as to ensure that the data accurately reflects all patients including those admitted on trolleys in Emergency Departments.

19/17 The IMO has concerns that OECD data on healthcare is not capturing all the relevant information so as to accurately reflect the expenditure and level of activity across the health system both public and private. It is imperative that, if such data is to be used for the purpose of health service planning, it be accurate and reliable.

Update: The IMO wrote to the Dept of Health who responded:

The Department of Health has commenced work on a Health Information System Strategy to ensure that high quality health and social care information is available to the public, health and social care professionals, researchers and policy makers.

The strategy will aim to ensure that we have a fit for purpose health information system in Ireland that will address the information needs of the health and social care sector, as well as the needs of international organisations such as the WHO, Eurostat and the OECD.

It will identify current information gaps in health and social care and will put in place plans to address these gaps. It will also deal with issues related to the accessibility of health and social care data for use by the public, clinicians, policy makers and researchers, while at the same time ensuring that the highest standards of information governance and data protection apply.

NATIONAL ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS

19/18 The IMO calls on Government as a matter of urgency, and in light of the substantial risk to patient safety, to ensure there is a national electronic patient record put in place in all health services in Ireland.

Update: The IMO wrote to the Dept of Health who responded:

“The role of eHealth in the reform of the health services was recognised in the Sláintecare Report and the deployment of EHRs across the health system is one of the key deliverables of the Sláintecare Implementation Strategy.

Following the deployment of EHR's to maternity sites at Cork University Maternity Hospital (CUMH), Kerry General (maternity unit), the Rotunda and Holles Street, St James Hospital went live with an enterprise wide EHR in September 2018. Government approval was recently secured to commence the procurement process for the EHR at the Children's Hospital. Further engagements are planned with DPER seeking for approval to proceed with procurements for cover other sites/ regions. The level of investment required is such that government decisions will be required to facilitate the necessary investment. “

The IMO for a number of years has called for investment in a national system of electronic health records and will continue to advocate for investment until EHRs are in place across all health services.

SAFE WORKING CONDITIONS FOR HEALTHCARE STAFF

19/19 Fatigue amongst doctors and other healthcare staff is a danger to both the staff member and patients and the IMO calls on the Minister for Health and the HSE to immediately work with the IMO and Postgraduate Training Bodies to develop, resource and support policies to create a safer and healthier environment.

Update: The IMO wrote to the Minister for Health and the HSE's National Doctor Training and Planning Office and continues to seek engagement on the issue of fatigue amongst doctors.

19/20 The IMO calls on the HSE to provide care pathways for violent and/or abusive patients to be treated in primary care, secondary care and community settings. Such pathways must adequately

protect healthcare workers, other staff and patients from harm. The IMO further calls on the HSE to designate a national officer to be responsible for the administration of protocol and the maintenance of a national register of such incidents.

Update: Under the IMO GP Agreement, work has commenced on a violent and abusive patients scheme for patients in primary and community care settings. However, further work must be done in the secondary care system to ensure that doctors, other healthcare staff and patients are not put at risk through the actions of a minority of violent or abusive patients. In particular ED settings must have adequate protocols and protections for dealing with such patients.

COMPASSIONATE LEAVE

19/21 The IMO calls on the HSE to re-engage with the Staff Panel of Trade Unions on the issue of compassionate leave and to provide arrangements for such leave which match those arrangements available to civil service employees.

Update: Engagement resumed between the Staff Panel of Unions and the HSE, but agreement did not prove to be possible. As such, the matter was referred to the Labour Court, who found, largely, in favour of the union side. After further engagement, HSE HR Circular 29/2019 was issued in October 2019 which set out the new arrangements. While there was dispute as to some terms of the circular, members may avail of the terms.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST

19/22 The IMO calls on health service employers to review their requirements for an English Language test when applied to anyone educated here to the level of Leaving Certificate English or equivalent who find they now have an additional barrier to employment because they went overseas to gain access to medical school.

Update The IMO wrote to the HSE regarding this motion.

CAPACITY

19/23 The IMO calls on the Government to resource and enact a 6 Hour Target for Emergency Departments in line with the recommendations proposed by the IMO.

19/24 The IMO calls on Government to invest in an accelerated programme of Acute Hospital Capacity not at the minimum requirement of 2,600 additional beds but at a more realistic 5,000 bed requirement level to meet patient demand and to ensure doctors can treat patients appropriately.

Update General Motions 19/23 to 19/24: The IMO has persistently called for investment in hospital bed capacity to address year-round overcrowding in our Emergency Departments. Over the last year bed capacity has features in the IMO Budget Submission 2020, the IMO campaign for the general elections as well as numerous submissions and press releases.

19/25 The IMO calls on the Department of Health and the HSE, in advance of any reconfiguration of services, to examine and publish details of the expected flow of patients and additional resources required to be put in place to appropriately manage the patients.

19/26 The IMO calls upon the Government to urgently review their commitments with respect to development of retrieval services in order to ensure capacity and capability to provide a robust and consistent national critical care retrieval service, particularly for areas which are outside of the recommended travel times to Trauma Centres/Units.

Update General Motions 19/25 to 19/26: The IMO has written to the Department of Health and the HSE regarding these motions.

19/27 The IMO calls on Government to urgently review the constraints which need to be overcome for 24/7 access to onsite HEMS service to avoid road transfers to pre-identified landing sites.

Update: The IMO wrote to the Department of Health who responded that

“...following engagement by the Department with the Department of Defence on the feasibility of extending the EAS (Emergency Aeromedical Service) to night time hours, it has been concluded that night time flying carries significant additional risks. All the risks associated with landing and departures are magnified at night including low visibility and crew fatigue. There are also restrictions on helicopters landing at night time in Ireland, and such landings can only take place on either a lit helipad or at an airport. These restrictions significantly reduce the number of emergency incidents that the service could respond to, in fact, it is possible that most night time calls would, in view of the risks involved, be better served by land vehicle access...”

OPEN DISCLOSURE

19/28 The IMO calls on the Government to provide appropriate resources across the health system to support both patients and healthcare professionals in the Open Disclosure process including:

- Clear guidance and comprehensive training for healthcare professionals
- Appropriate emotional and psychological supports and liaison staff
- Adequate resourcing of incident and risk management teams
- Resources to allow doctors to be released from clinical duties and to engage in training, open disclosure meetings, investigations and risk management teams

19/29 The IMO calls for a review of the current procedures for open disclosure under the Civil Liability (Amendment) Act 2017 to ensure that they are fit for purpose and do not negatively impact on the patient-doctor relationship, before moving to a system of supported and resourced open disclosure.

19/30 The IMO calls on the Government to ensure that healthcare managers are held to the same level of accountability as medical professionals.

19/31 In light of a recent high profile case in the UK, the IMO are calling on the Government and the Medical Council to ensure that doctors are protected from criminal proceedings when acting in good faith and disclosing and reporting serious patient safety incidents.

Update General Motions 19/28 to 19/31: The IMO developed a comprehensive position paper on the General Scheme of the Patient Safety Bill 2018 which included General Motions 18/28 to 19/31 and wrote to the Minister for Health seeking a meeting to discuss the issues raised. These issues were also raised at a seminar on Open Disclosure at the IMO

AGM 2019 and throughout the IMO conference *Medical Negligence – The Case for Reform* in November 2019.

In December 2019. The Government published the Patient Safety (Notifiable Patient Safety Incidents) Bill 2019 which took on board a number of the concerns made by the IMO. The IMO will continue to monitor the Patient Safety (Notifiable Patient Safety Incidents) Bill 2019 as it passes through the Oireachtas and will continue to advocate for changes in line with the IMO submission to the Minister for Health and to ensure appropriate resources are allocated to support open disclosure and that policy and procedures are fit for purpose.

CANNABIS

19/32 Cannabis is now the most common reason for new referrals to addiction services nationally. There is a view among many young people that Cannabis is a safe recreational drug that can be used with no consequences. There is no national campaign advising the dangers of Cannabis use especially in young adolescents. We call on the Dept. of Health to stop abrogating its responsibilities and organise a resourced campaign highlighting the dangers of Cannabis use.

Update: The IMO wrote to the Minister for Health regarding this motion.

VITAMIN AND SUPPLEMENTS REGULATION

19/33 In the UK greater than 1 in 8 admissions to hospitals are due to drug interactions. It is likely to be similar in Ireland. Many of these are unrecorded vitamin or supplements taken by patients inadvertently on foot of misinformation provided by the alternative medicines industry. We call on the Minister for Health to ensure that there is more regulation on health food stores/purveyors of these products especially in light that the FSAI have indicated concern with the exponential use of these products in the absence of evidence of need and that they only advise the need for Folate and Vitamin D in specific circumstances.

Update: the IMO received the following response from the Department of Health – Food Unit

“... FSAI has endeavoured to confirm the statement above in respect of UK hospital admissions and the likely similar situation in Ireland, We are not aware of data in Ireland to support the statement above.

The FSAI recognises that although there are only two national policies on food supplements – Vitamin D and folic acid for women of child-bearing age, there are also cases where there is a clinical need for supplements, especially in some vulnerable groups in the population. As such dieticians or medical practitioners sometimes advise the use of vitamins or mineral supplements for clinical reasons.”

The Department highlighted EU Directive 2002/46/EC on food supplements regulations which came into effect in Ireland in 2007.

“Compliance with food legislation on the manufacture, import, distribution and retail sale of food supplements in Ireland is supervised by the Environmental Health Service, HSE. A risk-based inspection and sampling programme is in place at all stages of the food supplement supply chain in Ireland. FSAI hosts the food supplement notification system. A modernised

on-line notification system was introduced in late 2018 to replace the earlier system. There has been a marked increase in the number of notifications received by FSAI in recent years.

FSAI has a number of publications to facilitate compliance by food business operators and to support the verification of compliance with the relevant food legislation. ...

Specific concerns should be followed up with the FSAI or the HSE.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

19/34 The IMO calls on MEPs to ensure that health is placed high on the EU agenda in line with Health Check the CPME (Standing Committee of European Doctors) manifesto for the European Elections

Update: The IMO is an active member of CPME (Standing Committee of European Doctors) – as First Vice-President of CPME and chair of the CPME Working Group on Healthy Living, Irish delegates Dr Ray Walley and Dr Patrick O’Sullivan engage on an ongoing basis with MEPs to ensure health is placed high on the EU agenda.