Minutes of the Health Budget Oversight Meeting (HBOG)
21 May 2020
Conference Call 2:30pm

Health Service Executive:	Stephen Mulvany, Tim Cummins, Colum Maddox, Angela Fitzgerald, Nigel O'Keefe, Damien McCallion, Mark O'Connor, Helen Byrne, Pat Healy,
Department of Health:	Paul Bolger, Fiona Prendergast, Greg Dempsey, David Smith, Kevin Colman, Fergal Goodman, Caoimhe Dolan, David Bolger, Denise McCarthy, Eoin Halpin, Matthew Dignam, Sharon Gilligan, Aidan Gilchrist, Shane Corr, Kieran Harrington.
D/Public Expenditure & Reform:	Ronnie Downes (Chair), David Owens, Terry Jennings, Patrick Moran, Deirdre Collins, Robert Scott, Cian McCarthy, Albert Morris.
EY:	Carthach McCarthy

1. **Minutes of previous meeting**

Previously submitted amendments from D/Health and the HSE for the Minutes of the meeting held on May 14th were discussed and agreed.

2. **GP Revised Contract**

The Group was informed that a clinical group has been established, chaired by the Chief Clinical Officer and including senior representatives from General Practice, which has been useful in tracking activity on the ground. Overall activity and costs are broadly in line with what was expected by the time.

It was agreed by the Group that a full analysis, with sufficient data, must be completed well in advance of the 16th of June - the date by which a decision about the continuation of this measure must be made.

3. **Update on HSE COVID-19 Action Plan**

Logged queries – state-of-play:
The diligence and effort of the HSE in responding to queries was positively noted. The Group acknowledged the need for materiality in all queries submitted to the HSE, given the considerable work that is required to answer some queries.

4. **COVID-19 Reporting and Monitoring**

Temporary Assistance Payment Scheme (Nursing Homes)

Following consideration of Attorney General advice, DoH said the Scheme is to be expanded to include non-NHSS clients in private nursing homes. It was noted that communications among HSE, DoH and DPER on this issue were operating efficiently.

Action: Department of Health to share AG's advice with D/PER

Testing

A Memo to Government is forthcoming regarding overall testing and contact tracing strategy.
It was requested that the funding implications of these measures be clearly outlined in the memo.

Monthly COVID-19 Expenditure Memo

D/Health have shared a draft of the May Memo on COVID-19 Expenditure.

DPER to send a set of comments or observations on the draft memo, which is envisaged to go to Government on 29 May.

Private Hospitals

The Group discussed the HSE's draft note on the continuation of the Private Hospitals agreement.

The HSE explained that it had had regard in its analysis in particular to the criteria of clinical need; workability of the arrangement; mandate; value; and alternatives. Against these criteria, on balance the organisation was inclined toward the view that some level of supplementary private hospital capacity should be maintained and that the continuation of the current arrangement, for some or all of the private hospitals, until end-August would be appropriate. The HSE's draft recommendations were awaiting approval by their Board, at which point they would be considered by the Department of Health.

There was an extensive discussion of the issue, by reference to the draft note and to the assessment criteria. DoH noted that, while encouraged by the assessment criteria and analytical approach used, it was reserving its final assessment until the HSE recommendations were concluded and duly transmitted to the Department. DPER noted *inter alia* the need for evaluation of alternatives for securing needed capacity; and that differentials in capacity usage as between various types of private hospital would be expected to have a bearing upon considerations of value-for-money and upon the final recommendations.

HSE and DoH agreed to reflect on the points raised in discussion in finalising and progressing their consideration of this matter, in advance of DoH bringing a Memo for Government during the week of 25 May.

5. AOB

There was no other business.

Next meeting: Thursday 28th May, 2:30pm.