Health Budget Oversight Group Minutes

11th June 2020. 2:30pm

Health Service Executive:	Stephen Mulvany, Tim Cummins, Colum Maddox, Angela Fitzgerald, Nigel O'Keefe, Damien McCallion, Mark O'Connor, Helen Byrne, Tony Patterson.
Department of Health:	Paul Bolger, Fiona Prendergast, Kevin Colman, , Caoimhe Dolan, David Bolger, Denise McCarthy, Eoin Halpin, Matthew Dignam, Aidan Gilchrist, Shane Corr, Evan Walker, Mark Hennessy, Karl Duff,
D/Public Expenditure & Reform:	Ronnie Downes (Chair), David Owens, Terry Jennings, Patrick Moran, Deirdre Collins, Robert Scott, Cian McCarthy, Albert Morris.

1. **Minutes & Agenda**

Suggestions to amend the previous HBOG meeting from 4 June 2020 were agreed.

2. **Update on HSE COVID-19 Action Plan – Finance, including**

   - **Logged queries – state-of-play**

Further information on testing, regarding arrangements for indemnity, has been circulated.

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

- **Private Hospitals**

The HSE updated the Group on the activity levels within the private hospitals, noting a gradual increase in in-patient numbers over the previous four weeks.

A separate group has been established regarding the future use of private hospital capacity by the HSE after the current arrangement has ended.

- **Private Nursing Homes – uptake and legal advice**

Officials from the Department of Health and Department of Public Expenditure and Reform presented the findings of a recently completed report, which outlines the expected expenditure of the Nursing Home Support Scheme.

The report concludes that the expenditure for the scheme is not expected to exceed the sanctioned amount.

A proposal regarding the continuation, or otherwise, of the scheme is required within the next week.

- **GP revised contract**

It was noted that the issues in relation to the special GP payments for both GMS and non-GMS clients, in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, were currently the subject of discussion between

both Departments, in advance of the Minister for Health bringing a proposal to the Government this week regarding the future of this arrangement.

- **PPE Procurements**

The Group was reminded that a sanction request for the additional expenditure required for existing orders of PPE must be submitted to DPER without delay.

Engagement has been ongoing between the HSE and the Department of Health on the modelling for future PPE requirements. It was reiterated that any future expenditure on PPE must be approved by Government.

- **Testing**

A constructive meeting between the relevant parties was held earlier in the week. A draft memo on testing is forthcoming.

The Department of Health informed the Group that they have minimised the nugatory risk of procuring unused capacity, and that there is a desire to maximise the amount of testing done domestically, for reasons of efficiency and expediency.

4. Health Budget Profile and Monitoring

A Memo will be brought to Government tomorrow (12 June) regarding the practical steps involved in processing Revised Estimates for 2020. The Group was informed that, in broad terms, the Revised Estimates will have to be agreed at departmental level before the end of June, and put before Dáil for approval during July. Engagement will accordingly have to get under way shortly between D/PER and DoH officials to finalise the revised Health vote skeleton.

2019 end-year financial figures and most recently available Management Data Reports will be sent to D/PER in the coming days.

5. AOB

The impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the ability of HSE to achieve financial savings, and in turn to fund new developments in 2020, was discussed.

Next meeting is scheduled for 18th June, 2:30pm.