Health Budget Oversight Group Minutes

18th June 2020. 2:30pm

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

1. **Minutes & Agenda**

Minutes from the previous HBOG meeting from 11th June 2020 were agreed.

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

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

A discussion around the Flash Report to 5th June took place. It was outlined to the group that the Flash Report presented costs in key areas presented on predominately a gross basis. The monthly HSE PR report presents an overall net position for all costs with April and May PR's separating out direct COVID costs from overall spend.

PER stated that net figures would need to be presented to the Group on a more comprehensive basis as soon as possible.

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

- **PPE Procurements**

HSE Procurement are reviewing figures on PPE spend that were made public this week and will revert to the Group with the overall commitment figure and reasons for any differences between publicly available and HBOG-reported figures. DPER noted that a letter had issued to D/Health underlining the need for major expenditure on PPE to remain within the terms of the Government decision, and there was agreement on the principle that such expenditure should proceed in line with sanction.

A brief overview of PPE forecast modelling was presented to the Group. It was requested that an international comparison be included in the analysis.

Action: D/Health to share analysis of PPE modelling with PER early next week and a more in depth meeting to discuss will be held in parallel to the HBOG.

Action: HSE to determine and share details of total PPE expenditure to date early next week.

- **GP revised contract**

The Minister for Health has brought a proposal to Government regarding the future of the arrangement in relation to the special GP payments in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. A Statutory Instrument on prescription charges is awaiting signature.

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

€10.4m has been notified for payment under the Temporary Assistance Payment Scheme (TAPS) to date. Non-financial supports are currently being costed and will be shared with the Group. There is a potential underspend in this area.

A proposal regarding the continuation, or otherwise, of the scheme is required within the next week. D/Health are formulating policy recommendations and will present to the Group on this next week.

- **Private Hospitals**

PER enquired as to the detail on the breakdown of April and May actual costs which had not yet been shared with the Group. Up to date data on the utilisation of private capacity is also awaited, along with a breakdown of the proportion of public and private patients treated. This information is needed to facilitate due scrutiny of the remainder of the original agreement and should also be used to provide insights that can inform the renegotiation of the agreement at month end.

Action: PER to continue to log list of questions in regard to private hospitals in the weekly HBOG queries log for HSE response.

- **Citywest**

HSE to send letter next week in regard to the retention or otherwise of the Citywest facility.

- **Testing**

A summary note/paper in regard to the testing strategy which includes those groups to be tested (i.e. Nursing Home staff) to be forwarded to DPER.

4. <u>Health Budget Profile and Monitoring</u>

PER and D/Health are currently working on finalising REV 2020, on the basis of Government decisions taken to date regarding the Covid-19 response.

5. <u>AOB</u>

<u>Pay and IR</u>

Compensation, allowances and payment claims in relation to COVID-19 healthcare workers were briefly outlined to the Group. HSE, PER and D/Health to continue to engage on this as it proceeds.

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

Next meeting is scheduled for 25th June, 2:30pm.