



TASC

THE ADELAIDE HOSPITAL SOCIETY

THE JESUIT CENTRE FOR FAITH AND JUSTICE

Public Conference

*Health Service Reform–The Government's First Year:  
What Progress?*

Thursday, 8 March 2012

Croke Park Conference Centre  
Dublin 3

## CONTEXT

### **Government Commitments on Health Reform**

The *Programme for National Recovery 2011–2016*, agreed by Fine Gael and the Labour Party, as they entered Government in March 2011, included substantial commitments for the reform of the Irish health care system, and made the following declaration:

*This Government is the first in the history of the State that is committed to developing a universal, single-tier health service, which guarantees access to medical care based on need, not income. By reforming our model of delivering healthcare ... we can reduce the cost of achieving the best health outcomes for our citizens, and end the unfair, unequal and inefficient two-tier health system.*

The most radical element of the Programme's commitments on health was the promise to introduce a system of Universal Health Insurance (UHI) by 2016. This would involve compulsory health insurance for all, with the cost of premiums related to income.

The Programme promised that, following the introduction of UHI, the Government would provide

*guaranteed access to care for all in public and private hospitals on the same basis as the privately-insured have now.*

The Programme also promised significant developments in primary care, with progressive steps towards free GP care within the life of the Government, the expansion of services provided at primary care level and the development of greater integration between primary and hospital care.

In addition, in June 2011, the Government announced its intention to develop a new public health framework, *Your Health is Your Wealth*. This initiative, which was not signalled in the *Programme for National Recovery*, has the aim of improving the overall health of the population and reducing health inequalities.

### **What progress?**

One year on from the formation of the Coalition Government, what progress has been made in respect of its substantial commitments in the area of health reform? Is the Government on course to deliver on these commitments within the next four years? Is its programme of reform achievable, given the realities of the budgetary constraints affecting all areas of public expenditure?

These and related issues will be explored in this conference which is being organised jointly by TASC, The Adelaide Hospital Society and The Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice. The conference will be of interest to policy-makers, health care professionals, academics, NGOs, and all who are concerned about improving the health of the nation and the development of an equitable and appropriate health care service, even in the face of the economic difficulties now facing the country.

## PROGRAMME

**09.00 am      Registration**

*Chair of morning session: Dr Muiris Houston, Journalist and Health Analyst*

**09.55 am      Welcome and Introduction to the Minister for Health,  
Dr James Reilly TD**

Dr Nat O'Connor, Director, TASC

**10.00 am      Opening Address**

Dr James Reilly TD, Minister for Health

**10.30 am      Health Service Reform in the Programme for Government 2011–2016:  
What are the issues and what has been promised?**

Prof Richard Layte, ESRI

**11.00 am      Q&A**

**11.30 am      Coffee**

**11.45 am      Placing Primary Care Centre Stage**

Ms Róisín Shortall TD, Minister of State with Responsibility for Primary Care

**12.15 am      Going Up the Down Escalator: Preparations for UHI in Year 1 of the  
Coalition Government**

Dr Steve Thomas, Centre for Health Policy and Management, TCD

**12.45 pm      Q&A**

**1.30 pm      Lunch**

*Chair of afternoon session: Ms Deirdre O’Connell, Europa Donna Ireland, the Irish Breast Cancer Campaign*

**2.15 pm      Opening of Afternoon Session**

Prof Ian Graham, Chairperson, Adelaide Hospital Society

**Plenary Discussion: Health Service Reform – On target or stalled?**

***Panellists***

Dr Catherine Darker (Adelaide Hospital Society/TCD)

Mr Liam Woods (HSE)

Dr Bríd Hollywood (Ballymun Family Practice)

Ms Louise O’Reilly (SIPTU)

**3.30 pm      Addressing Public Health: The proposed policy framework for a healthier Ireland 2012–2020**

Dr Tony Holohan, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health

Ms Sinéad Pentony, Head of Policy, TASC

**4.25pm      Introduction to Dr Kieke Okma**

Fr John Guiney SJ, Director, Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice

**4.30 pm      Closing Keynote Address: Drawing International Lessons**

Dr Kieke Okma, Adjunct Associate Professor of Health Policy Management,  
Wagner School of Public Services, New York University

**5.00 pm      Q&A**

**5.15 pm      Close**

Prof Ian Graham, Chairperson, Adelaide Hospital Society

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

**Dr Catherine Darker** is the Adelaide Lecturer in Health Services Research within the Department of Public Health and Primary Care, Trinity College Dublin and works as a Health Psychologist in Jobstown in Tallaght. She is an Assistant Director of the TCD/HSE General Practice Training Scheme. She is author of peer-reviewed publications on a diverse range of issues, including addiction, health services research and chronic disease management. She is the holder of a Cochrane Fellowship awarded by the Health Research Board.

**Prof Ian Graham** is Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine in Trinity College, Dublin, Professor of Preventive Cardiology Emeritus in the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and past Vice-Chairman of the Board of Management at the Adelaide and Meath Hospital incorporating the National Children's Hospital in Dublin. He is Chairperson of the Adelaide Hospital Society and of its Health Policy Initiative. He is Chairperson of the Fourth Joint European Societies' Task Force on Cardiovascular Disease Prevention in Clinical Practice and of the European Prevention Implementation Committee.

**John Guiney SJ** is Director of the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice. He is also Director of the Irish Jesuit Mission Office and President of the Irish Missionary Union (IMU). He worked in Africa for more than twenty-five years, including serving as Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service Eastern Africa from 2001 to 2007.

**Dr Bríd Hollywood** is a general practitioner based in the Ballymun Family Practice, Dublin. Dr Hollywood is a founding member of DDoc (out-of-hours GP service) and is the current Chair of this service. During 1995 and 2000 she held an academic post within the Department of Public Health & Primary Care, Trinity College Dublin. She has published work on the process of building primary care teams in deprived areas and is currently a Trainer within the TCD/HSE GP Training Scheme and is committed to advancing medical education. In 2011, Dr. Hollywood became the Irish College of General Practitioners' GP Lead in the area of Mental Health for the HSE Clinical Care Programmes.

**Dr Tony Holohan** was appointed as Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health, in December 2008. His responsibilities include policy on a diverse range of medical and public health matters including patient safety, quality in health care, public health, reproductive health and social inclusion. He provides expert medical and public health evidence, analysis and advice to the Minister and to the Department. Dr Holohan qualified at UCD in 1991 and trained initially in General Practice and subsequently in public health medicine. He was appointed as Deputy Chief Medical Officer at the Department of Health and Children in 2001.

**Dr Muiris Houston** graduated in medicine from Trinity College Dublin in 1985. He subsequently completed specialist training in occupational medicine and in family practice. He worked for almost 10 years as a GP principal and occupational physician in Dublin, before moving to rural Co. Galway in 2000 as part of a career change when he was appointed medical correspondent with *The Irish Times*. He is a regular health analyst in both

Irish and English on TV and radio. Dr Houston has made a number of health programmes for both radio and TV. He was medical journalist of the year in Ireland in both 2001 and 2002. His major research interests are narrative medicine and patient safety.

**Prof Richard Layte** is a Research Professor at the Economic and Social Research Institute and an Adjunct Professor at Trinity College Dublin. His research examines the fundamental processes which influence the distribution of health and well-being in societies and how these are shaped by political economy and the structure and functioning of health care systems. Recent work has examined the relationship between country income inequality and individual health and he has a particular interest in improving understanding of how family background influences child health and development and the impact this has on the child's educational outcomes, adult health and life expectancy. He has a keen interest in Irish health care and the role that health care can play in improving health and well-being. He has published widely on all these issues both in Ireland and internationally in both the academic and policy domains.

**Deirdre O'Connell** is Vice Chairwoman of Europa Donna Ireland, The Irish Breast Cancer Campaign, a volunteer patient advocacy group whose members have had personal experience of a breast cancer diagnosis. She was a Board member of Europa Donna – The European Breast Cancer Coalition from 1999 to 2005, and was Vice President from 2004 to 2005, representing Europa Donna on various European breast cancer related bodies and speaking as a patient advocate at a number of conferences and seminars. Deirdre was a member of the National Quality Assurance Group for Symptomatic Breast Disease Services.

**Dr Nat O'Connor** is Director of TASC. Nat has a background in social science research. He previously led the research team in the Homeless Agency. He has been a consultant on local government service indicators and has been retained as an occasional lecturer by the Department of Applied Social Studies, NUI Maynooth. Nat holds a PhD in Political Science from Trinity College Dublin; his doctoral studies specialised in democratic theory and freedom of information.

**Dr Kieke Okma** worked with Dutch government agencies and international organizations for over 25 years. Since 2004, she lives in New York and works as Associate Professor at the Wagner School of Public Service, New York University and Visiting Professor at both Cornell University and Catholic University Leuven. She serves on the editorial boards of *Health Policy*, *the Journal of Health Politics*, *Policy and Law*, and the *Journal of Health Services Research and Policy*. Kieke Okma has widely lectured and published on a broad range of issues of health policy, health politics and international comparison.

**Louise O'Reilly** is a sector organiser with Ireland's largest trade union, SIPTU. She is also a member of the Public Services Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. She has represented workers in all areas of the Health Service including nurses, catering staff and porters. With over 40,000 members in the health sector SIPTU has a unique perspective on the quality of service provision and care and the implication of changes for staff. Louise has a BA (English and Greek & Roman Civilisation) and an MSc (Equality Studies) from UCD.



**Sinéad Pentony** is Head of Policy at TASC. Sinéad has a background in economics and equality and manages TASC's research and policy programme. Sinéad co-authored (with Sara Burke) TASC's report on *Eliminating Health Inequalities: A Matter of Life and Death* and she is also a contributing author to TASC's Flourishing Society essays. Previously, Sinéad spent ten years heading up Pobal's research programme where she managed the evaluation of a range of programmes and contributed to OECD conferences and publications on the evaluation of social inclusion programmes.

**Dr James Reilly TD** was appointed Minister for Health on the 9th March 2011. Minister Reilly was first elected to Dáil Éireann for Dublin North in 2007. He was appointed Party Spokesperson on Health in 2007 and Deputy Leader in July 2010. The Minister has worked as a G.P. in the North County Dublin area for the past 25 years. He was President of the Irish Medical Organisation prior to his election. Minister Reilly also served on the former Eastern Health Board, the Eastern Regional Health Authority and the Northern Area Health Board.

**Róisín Shortall TD** was appointed Minister of State for Primary Care in the Department of Health on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2011. Minister Shortall was first elected to Dáil Éireann in 1992 and re-elected at every election since then. The Minister has been a member of Committee of Public Accounts as well as a member of Joint Committee on Social and Family Affairs. Minister Shortall was a member of Dublin City Council from 1991 to 2003 and Chairperson of the Eastern Health Board 1996 – 1998. Minister Shortall is a former teacher of the deaf. The Minister also has membership of the Ballymun Neighbourhood Council and Ballymun Local Drugs Task Force and Finglas Crime Task Force.

**Dr Steve Thomas** is a lecturer in the Centre for Health Policy and Management, Trinity College Dublin. He is the principal author of the Adelaide Hospital Society reports on Social Health Insurance in Ireland. Steve has substantial international experience in health financing, resource allocation, policy analysis and system evaluation in academia and government. He was formerly the Director of the Health Economics Unit, University of Cape Town, South Africa. His current research interests include analysing the resilience of the Irish health system in the recession. He is also a director of the HRB Health Systems Research PhD Programme across TCD, RCSI and UCC.

**Liam Woods** is a UCD graduate and a qualified Chartered Accountant. Prior to joining the health services, he worked in the private sector in an accounting and consultancy organisation. He joined the health services in 1999 as Financial Director of the Eastern Regional Health Authority, serving in this post until the ERHA became part of the Health Service Executive in January 2005. As HSE National Director of Finance, Liam has responsibility for the management of the health system's budget and cash management system. This involves transforming the finance organisation from an 11 Board structure to an integrated national system. He also provides strategic financial and management support to the Board, the CEO and the National Directors of the Health Service Executive.