

DÁIL ÉIREANN

*Dé Máirt, 12 Deireadh
Fómhair, 2004*

Tuesday, 12th October, 2004

RIAR NA hOIBRE

ORDER PAPER

73 DÁIL ÉIREANN 1065

Dé Máirt, 12 Deireadh Fómhair, 2004

Tuesday, 12th October, 2004

2.30 p.m.

Fógraí Tairisceana:

Notices of Motions:

39. "That Dáil Éireann, noting the first statement of the Tánaiste and Minister for Health and Children in Dáil Éireann on Wednesday, 29th September, 2004, that 'the one thing I want for the country I love is to have a health service that is accessible to every citizen, regardless of their wealth', notes with grave concern the failure of the Government to deliver a health service accessible to all citizens regardless of their financial circumstances; and in particular notes:

— the two-tier health service with access based on ability to pay rather than on need;

— the failure of the Government to deliver on the promise of providing an extra 200,000 medical cards and the fiasco where well over 100,000 medical cards have been taken out of the system since 1997;

— the failure of the Government to deliver on the promises of 1,000 extra hospital beds, which will become more acute as we enter the winter season once again;

— the failure of the Government to address the underlying problems which contribute to the gross overcrowding of accident and emergency departments leading to the unacceptable loading of ill people on trolleys;

— the failure to develop a coherent strategy for outpatient waiting lists with special regard to those suffering on rheumatology, neurology, urology, orthopaedic and dermatology waiting lists;

— the failure of the Government to deliver on the Primary Care Strategy where €130 million was promised per year over 10 years, but only €15 million has been delivered in total after 3 years;

— the failure of the Government to end cancer care apartheid by providing multidisciplinary care including radiotherapy services to those who live outside Dublin and Cork so that some cancer patients will endure more radical surgery, or a painful death, due to an inability to properly access radiotherapy services;

— the failure of the Government to act on the feasibility study into an all-Ireland Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (H.E.M.S.) completed since April 2004 which is costing unnecessary lives due to dangerous transport practices between hospitals and is causing permanent disability, we being the only country in Europe without this service;

— the disgraceful under development of our hospital oncology services;

— that the number of consultant rheumatologists per 100,000 population at 0.3 is the lowest by far in the European Community, and also considerably lower than non – E.U. countries such as Croatia and the U.S.S.R;

— the failure of the Government to extend the mid-west pilot on cervical screening to the entire country, we being the only developed country in the E.U. which does not have a national cervical screening programme;

— the failure to extend the 'Breast Check' programme nationally in 2000, leading to needless death and suffering for our female population in the south west of Ireland;

— the failure of the Government to ensure an acceptable ambulance response time of 20 minutes resulting in a lesser chance of successful treatment and survival in acute medical emergencies such as road traffic accidents and heart attacks;

— the failure of the Government to address the promised upgrade of Ennis Hospital; the failure to provide adequate nurses for the Mayo Dialysis Unit; capital funding for Ballinrobe Community Nursing Unit; development of Tuam Hospital; the Health Care facility at Our Lady's Hospital, Cashel;

— the failure of the Government to invest in the development of new parallel services before contemplating the withdrawal of existing medical services; and

— the failure of the Government to extend to the rest of the health services the model already existing in general practice i.e. delivery of a same day and same place GP service, with equal access for public and private patients;

calls on the Tánaiste and Minister for Health and Children to state her position on:

— equality of access to the health service based on need and not on ability to pay;

— whether she intends to implement the Hanly report in view of the absence of public support, and no alternative services being available;

— the financial threshold for qualification for a medical card to be increased so that the 200,000 extra medical cards promised can be delivered;

— the urgent provision of 1,000 extra hospital beds – with full supporting staff;

— the Government to urgently address the overcrowding situation in our Accident and Emergency Departments;

— strategy to address the disgraceful outpatient waiting list situation;

- the proper funding of the primary care strategy as promised;
- adequate access to radio therapy services for those outside of the Cork and Dublin areas;
- the immediate establishment of an Inter Hospital Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (H.E.M.S) for Ireland;
- the full development of oncology services in our hospitals;
- the immediate appointment of consultants to include consultant rheumatologists and other necessary consultants to address the gross shortage existing presently;
- the extension of cervical screening nationally;
- the extension of the 'Breast Check' programme to the south and west of Ireland;
- a guarantee that all citizens be within a 20 mile radius of the nearest ambulance station and that adequate ambulances are available; and
- the full development of Ennis Hospital as promised; adequate nurse staffing for the Mayo dialysis unit; capital funding for the Ballinrobe Community Nursing Unit; the opening of the completed health care facilities at Our Lady's Hospital, Cashel; and approve the planning brief for Tuam Hospital;

and calls on the Minister to provide funding immediately to allow these projects to proceed. " — *Jerry Cowley, Tony Gregory, James Breen, Paudge Connolly, Seamus Healy, Joe Higgins, Finian McGrath, Paddy McHugh, Marian Harkin.*