

7th July 2008

IAEM Endorses use of *In Case of Emergency (ICE)*

For many years Emergency Services have been hampered by an inability to contact the next-of-kin of a patient found unconscious or unable to communicate as a result of illness or injury. In May 2005 a UK Paramedic Bob Brotchie suggested that individuals should keep the name and telephone number of their next-of-kin on their mobile phone under the heading **ICE (*In Case of Emergency*)**. Two months later the 7th July 2005 London bombings, which struck at transport in London, confirmed the need for such information to be rapidly available to Emergency Personnel. Since then, the use of **ICE** has gained significant popularity in Britain, Europe and now North America.

The Irish Association for Emergency Medicine (IAEM) as the representative body for Doctors working in Emergency Departments formally endorses the use of **ICE** as something which would make a significant difference to individuals (and the Emergency Services) should they be struck down by serious illness or injury. All IAEM members have had the frustrating experience of seeing valuable time lost at a critical time as multiple attempts are made to contact the next-of-kin of an individual patient when a process as simple as including their emergency contact under the name **ICE** in their mobile phone address book would have prevented this. The option exists to list more than one emergency contact as **ICE1**, **ICE2** etc.

In a country such as Ireland, which has very widespread mobile phone penetration, it should be possible for all adult residents to include one or more **ICE** numbers in their mobile phone address books and to ensure that their children's mobile phones are also so equipped. This will make it far easier to call next-of-kin in the unfortunate event of a medical crisis and to reduce needless delays. Don't wait! Do it today!

President:

Mr Fergal Hickey FRCS, FRCSEd.(A&E), DA(UK), FCEM
Consultant in Emergency Medicine

Sligo General Hospital
The Mall
Sligo
Ireland

Tel no: +353 71 9174505
Fax no: +353 71 9174646

Secretary:

Mr James Binchy FRCSEd.(A&E), Dip.Med.Tox., FCEM.
Consultant in Emergency Medicine

University College Hospital,
Newcastle Road
Galway
Ireland

Tel no: +353 91 542766
Fax no: +353 91 520154

Treasurer:

Dr Una Geary FRCSEd.(A&E), FRCPI, FCEM
Consultant in Emergency Medicine

St James's Hospital
James's St,
Dublin 8
Ireland

Tel no: +353 1 4103581 / 4162777
Fax no: +353 1 4103451