

9th February 2011

Ten point Sustainable & Equitable Emergency Care Strategy for the General Election 2011

As part of its advocacy role in promoting equitable and quality Emergency Care in Ireland, IAEM calls on all political parties to focus in the General Election campaign on the current and future Emergency Care needs of all Irish citizens. Although mindful of the prevailing adverse economic climate and the constraints this brings to healthcare funding, we urge all political parties to acknowledge and maintain the primacy of equitable and accessible Emergency Care throughout Ireland.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) includes the ethical principle of equity of access to life-saving care within the *WHO six-point Agenda* and as the general health of a society inevitably deteriorates during an economic recession, IAEM believes that easy, equal and prompt access to Emergency Care in Ireland is now more important than ever.

IAEM actively supports the vision and current strategy of the HSE Directorate of Quality & Clinical Care (DQCC), which has promoted the shared objective of improving access to quality care for all patients by undertaking several acute care programmes including the Emergency Medicine Programme (EMP). We strongly urge all political parties to commit to supporting these programmes and pledge ongoing investment to implement the EMP which will provide a 'grass roots up' approach to reforming and improving Emergency Care to all patients by introducing a *National Emergency Care Network*.

IAEM has integrated the key elements of the EMP into the following 10-point *Sustainable & Equitable Emergency Care Strategy* to facilitate informed debate and policy discussion during the current general election campaign. We believe that any incoming government should include this strategy when finalising the health brief within their Programme for Government.

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IAEM Sustainable & Equitable Emergency Care Strategy

Acknowledge the primacy of equal access to Emergency Care as a fundamental right of every Irish citizen.

Bring Emergency Care to the same level as Cancer Care in terms of strategic planning and spending i.e. develop a National Emergency Care Strategy.

Commit to and sustain a maximum 6 hour total time for admission to a hospital bed (not a trolley) or discharge for all patients attending Emergency Departments.

Deliver sustainable improvements in Emergency Care by investing in frontline emergency staff retention and recruitment across all grades and in all regions.

Eliminate Emergency Department overcrowding by enacting an effective Admission, Discharge and Escalation Framework including the Full Capacity Protocol.

Facilitate improvements in Best Emergency Patient Care by promoting and investing in Academic Emergency Medicine & Training.

Give active and sustained support to the DQCC HSE acute programmes in fast-tracking both the Acute Medicine and Emergency Medicine Programmes.

Highlight the commitment and service all staff in Emergency Care provide to Irish citizens, thus improving staff morale and resilience.

Improve Emergency Care infrastructure and facilities for the benefit of all patients, their families and staff even in the difficult economic climate that prevails.

Justify necessary health system reform and reconfiguration by enabling clinical justice for all patients with an equitable and accessible National Emergency Care Network.