

29<sup>th</sup> February 2008

**First Anniversary of HSE's failure to set date for introduction of a total maximum wait time of 6 hours from arrival at an Emergency Department to admission or discharge.**

The *Emergency Department Task Force* report completed on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2006, but not published until 1<sup>st</sup> June 2007, required the HSE, amongst other things, to set "a date, by 1<sup>st</sup> February 2007, to have determined the timeframe from which a maximum wait time of 6 hours from arrival at an Emergency Department (ED) to admission or discharge will apply and have detailed measures to be undertaken to enable each hospital to meet this target". As has generally occurred with the detailed and appropriate recommendations of the *ED Task Force*, no substantial progress has occurred and the HSE continues to miss important timelines.

Perhaps at this stage the HSE should finally come clean and tell the Irish public that it has no intention of implementing the *ED Task Force* recommendations, rather than paying little more than lip service to them. It is well known both to those working at the coal face and to the unfortunate patients who are left languishing on trolleys that there has been no significant improvement in ED overcrowding.

The continued use of inaccurate figures, which studies have shown misrepresent the actual time spent in Emergency Departments by up to 60%, suggests that the HSE is more interested in a propaganda war giving the impression of progress than assiduously working to improve the lot of those patients unfortunate enough to be required to wait in the ED for provision of a hospital bed.

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