

3rd June 2011

IAEM welcomes announcement that the new Special Delivery Unit (SDU) will address the worsening problem of Emergency Department overcrowding

The Irish Association for Emergency Medicine welcomes the decision of the Minister for Health, Dr. James Reilly TD, to task the newly announced SDU with the urgent responsibility of addressing Emergency Department (ED) overcrowding as its first priority. The Minister's announcement that significant funding will be diverted from the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) to the SDU in order to tackle worsening ED overcrowding and prevent the critical levels of overcrowding seen in January 2011, improves the likelihood of success.

The recent financial difficulties with the *Fair Deal* scheme are delaying the discharge of elderly patients from acute hospitals and preventing their transfer to more appropriate healthcare facilities. This and the increasing numbers of hospital beds closed for cost containment or other reasons has significantly worsened the persistent problem of overcrowding of EDs with hospital inpatients (inpatient boarders).

We wish to congratulate Dr. Martin Connor on his appointment to head up the SDU and to the new HSE board and wish him every success in his endeavours. We offer our full support and expertise and would highlight the extensive body of international literature including the *Emergency Department Task Force Report* from 2007, which describes the steps that are necessary to address the ongoing overcrowding crisis. The necessity to ensure systematic improvements in how hospital services outwith the ED and community services deal with their workload is integral to the resolution of the overcrowding problem which is so manifest in the country's EDs.

We hope to work closely with the SDU and Dr. Connor in rapidly achieving the shared goals of improving Emergency Care for all our patients.

President:

Mr. Fergal Hickey FRCS, FRCSEd, 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. John McInerney FRCSEd, DipIMC, FCEM.
Consultant in Emergency Medicine,

Mater Misericordiae University Hospital
Eccles St.
Dublin 7
Ireland

Tel No: +353 1 803 4342
Fax No: +353 1 803 2850

Treasurer:

Mr. Niall O'Connor DCH, DObs, MRCP, FRCSEd, FCEM
Consultant in Emergency Medicine

Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital
Drogheda
Co. Louth
Ireland

Tel No: +353 41 9874791
Fax No: +353 41 9874799