



Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

123 St. Stephen's Green
Dublin 2
Ireland

www.emergencymedicine.ie

11th March 2009

IAEM publishes position paper on access to out-of-hours Social Services

A number of recent media reports have highlighted difficulties accessing social worker support for out-of-hours crises, particularly those involving children. Emergency Departments (EDs) are particularly exposed to these difficulties.

The IAEM has today published a position paper on *Access to out-of-hours Social Worker Services*. The paper highlights the key role that Medical Social Workers play in the ED assessment and management of vulnerable patients and the fact that 60% of Irish EDs do not have direct access to a dedicated ED Medical Social Worker. The paper also highlights the urgent need for dedicated ED access to Medical Social Workers on a 24 hour, 7 day week basis nationally.

As the economic downturn worsens, the current, pressing need for social work support to already overstretched EDs will increase further. It is incumbent on the Health Service Executive (HSE) to finally address this need, which has been ignored, to date.

Visit www.emergencymedicine.ie to view the position paper.

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. James Binchy FRCSEd, Dip.Med.Tox., FCEM.
Consultant in Emergency Medicine,

University College Hospital
Newcastle Road,
Galway,
Ireland

Tel No: +353 91 542 766
Fax No: +353 91 520 154

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