

27th September 2010**IAEM Response to draft Acute Medicine Programme Implementation Strategy**

The Irish Association for Emergency Medicine welcomes the development of the Acute Medicine Programme as one of the national clinical programmes jointly initiated by the HSE Directorate of Quality and Clinical Care (DQCC) and the country's Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies.

We support this programme as a clinician-led initiative to improve and standardise the quality of care provided to patients with acute medical problems. In particular, IAEM welcomes the proposed provision of early and ongoing senior doctor input into the acute care of patients with medical problems and the alignment of diagnostic imaging and support services to expedite patient care. The potential benefits of Acute Medicine should be available to GP-referred patients and Emergency Department (ED) patients referred for in-patient care.

IAEM supports the development of acute medical units in a co-located model with EDs. It is accepted that Acute Medicine will be developed conjointly with Emergency Medicine rather than by competition for resources, in close clinical collaboration between Acute Physicians and Consultants in Emergency Medicine with the shared aim of enhancing patient care across the Emergency Medicine and Acute Medicine interface.

Successful implementation of the Acute Medicine model will require profound changes in how medical care is delivered across the entire health system. Similar to Emergency Medicine, the effectiveness of Acute Medicine will be compromised unless there is improved access to in-patient bed capacity through a reduction in delayed discharges and avoidance of bed closures.

IAEM members have already contributed significantly to the development of the strategy and colleagues in Emergency Medicine have been invited to contribute further to the refinement of the current draft document which is still in development.

In parallel, IAEM, its training body, (the Advisory Committee on Emergency Medicine Training) and the Irish National Board of the College of Emergency Medicine have nominated representatives to a further DQCC national clinical programme in Emergency Medicine which aims to improve the quality, access, cost-effectiveness and safety of Emergency Medicine in Ireland. The Emergency Medicine Programme now underway will be developed in conjunction with other key acute specialty programmes including Acute Medicine.

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