

4th December 2015

IAEM welcomes Taoiseach's comments on Galway Emergency Department

IAEM welcomes the [candid admission by the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, in Dail Eireann on 2nd December 2015](#) that the Emergency Department (ED) of Galway University Hospital (GUH) is unfit for purpose.

Opened in the late nineties as an interim development, it has been known for many years in Galway; within the HSE and the Department of Health that the GUH ED is seriously deficient from an infrastructural perspective and is completely unable to cope with the number of patients attending for care on a daily basis. Compounding the difficulties experienced by patients, medical and nursing staff is the fact that GUH has also a serious bed capacity problem. This means that large numbers of inpatient boarders (admitted hospital inpatients waiting on trolleys) remain in the ED long after the decision to admit has been made. This combination greatly increases the risk for patients and the difficulties for those tasked with caring for them. To date, this awareness has not resulted in the necessary action (the building of a new ED) being taken.

The [Emergency Department Task Force Report published in 2007](#) noted that there were a large number of the country's EDs that were either not fit for purpose or had significant infrastructural deficiencies. While some of these have been addressed and some departments extended and/or refurbished, there is still a significant number that have major infrastructural deficits that require urgent attention. Although Galway University Hospital may be the worst example, the EDs at Sligo University Hospital, Mayo University Hospital, Cavan General Hospital and the Midlands Regional Hospital, Mullingar need significant upgrading or in some cases replacement.

Over a million patients attend the country's EDs per year and this number is set to rise. It is imperative that a capital programme be developed to improve the infrastructure of all of the country's EDs. Even those departments that have been upgraded in the past few years are often poorly laid out or in need of further enhancement to optimise their functioning. Adequate budgets must be provided to allow EDs to be developed to the standard necessary to practice 21st century Emergency Medicine.

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