

Ms. Phil Ní Sheaghda, General Secretary, Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation
Ms. Rosarii Mannion, HSE National Director for Human Resources

25th January 2019

Re: Impact of proposed industrial action by INMO members on Emergency Departments

Dear Phil/Rosarii,

I am writing to you as President of the Irish Association for Emergency Medicine, on behalf of its members, to impress on both of you the very serious patient safety implications of the proposed industrial action by INMO Nurses on the country's 29 Emergency Departments (EDs). Unlike most other services, Emergency Departments are, by definition, where patients go or are brought to because they have life or limb threatening conditions or other serious conditions which put their health at risk. Only a tiny percentage of our attendances could be described as 'planned' work and clearly activities such as scheduled review clinics will be cancelled on the dates of the proposed industrial action. On this basis, we would strongly argue that it is imperative that the nurse staffing of EDs is maintained during the industrial action and that nurses, who are a particularly valued and skilled workforce, are allowed to do what they normally do in providing Emergency Department clinical care.

While this is our earnest plea from the perspective of trying to ensure the safety of all patients who are obliged to attend an ED, we do recognise that in a situation of industrial action this patient safety ideal of normal ED nurse staffing levels is unlikely to be conceded. As an absolute minimum therefore we are of the view that the staffing configuration that would apply on Christmas Day should be what is provided to the country's EDs during the period of industrial action. In addition to the absolute numbers, we would strongly be of the view that the functions carried out by nursing staff including the necessary prioritisation of patients with regard to clinical care, be maintained. Unfortunately, anything less than this will significantly risk adverse impacts for patients and genuine harm could occur. We appreciate that neither of these eventualities is in the interest of the parties involved.

Please be advised that our association is a registered charity which advocates for the highest

President:

Dr. C. Emily O'Connor
MRCPI, FRCEM
Consultant in Emergency Medicine.
Connolly Hospital,
Blanchardstown, Dublin,
D15 X40D
Ireland.
Tel: +353 1 646 6250
Fax: +353 1 646 6286

Secretary:

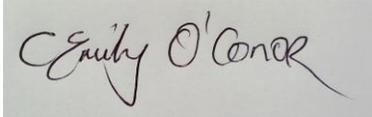
Mr. M. Ashraf Butt
FRCSI, Dip IMC (RCSEd), FRCSEd (A&E), EMDM
Consultant in Emergency Medicine.
Cavan General Hospital,
Lisdarn, Cavan
H12 Y7W1
Ireland.
Tel: +353 49 437 6401
Fax: +353 49 437 6468

Treasurer:

Dr. Sinead O'Gorman
MMedSci, DCH, FRCSI, FACEM, FRCEM
Consultant in Emergency Medicine.
Letterkenny University Hospital,
Letterkenny, Co. Donegal,
F91 AE82
Ireland.
Tel: +353 74 912 3744
Fax: +353 74 912 3797

standards of clinical care provision in Ireland's EDs and it is from this standpoint alone that we are making this earnest plea.

Yours sincerely,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature reads "Emily O'Connor" in a cursive, flowing script.

Dr. Emily O'Connor MRCPI, FRCEM
Consultant in Emergency Medicine, Connolly Hospital, Blanchardstown, Dublin
President, Irish Association for Emergency Medicine