



# Saolta

Grúpa Ollscoile Cúram Sláinte  
University Health Care Group

# e-Newsletter

Issue 50 Summer 2022



## Our e-Newsletter journey

### 2012 to 2022



Issue 01 Feb 2012



Issue 15 Feb 2014



Issue 19 Dec 2014  
1st Saolta Newsletter



Issue 30 Apr 2017



Issue 42 Jul 2020  
COVID Special



Issue 45 Mar 2021  
Vaccine roll-out



Welcome to the 50th edition of the Saolta newsletter, so much has happened since the very first edition.

Since we issued our first newsletter in February 2012, there have been many positive events, initiatives and service improvements taking place across the Group. Our hospitals along with the wider health service have also faced many unforgettable challenges over the past 10 years. It is only through the resilience and commitment of staff that we have managed to continue to provide care to so many of our patients.

Despite the daily pressures, tremendous work has taken place across the Saolta Group of hospitals and we have been honoured to include many of these fantastic initiatives and service improvements across our 50 editions. And you, our staff, have been at the heart of all these improvements, always ensuring that we continue to provide excellent patient care.

Thank you for your continued contributions and we look forward to reading your future submissions. If you wish to contribute to the Saolta Newsletter or give us your feedback, please contact: [newsletter.saolta@hse.ie](mailto:newsletter.saolta@hse.ie)

**NEXT ISSUE: Content deadline for the Autumn issue is 09 September 2022**

**For feedback/comments or to submit content, please email [newsletter.saolta@hse.ie](mailto:newsletter.saolta@hse.ie)**

# Saolta Tweets

**saoltagroup**  
@saoltagroup

Our fab team from HR and senior nursing & midwifery management are ready to go at [#Manchester Healthcare Job Fair @HcJobFair!](#) We are recruiting today for a huge selection of posts in our 6 hospitals the stunning west of Ireland, stop by and say hello 🙋

[#Belong #JobFairy](#)



ChiefNurse and 2 others

11:42 AM · Apr 9, 2022 · Twitter for Android

[View Tweet analytics](#)

14 Retweets 1 Quote Tweet 58 Likes

**saoltagroup**  
@saoltagroup

This is a wonderful, weatherproof addition to the outdoor space in Letterkenny University Hospital

[Health Promotion @ Letterkenny University H...](#) @HealthPromo... · Apr 25

Our new outdoor pods installed today outside main reception and cardio rehab. These are the first of a number of outdoor furniture units arriving to LUH over the coming months. [#StaffHealthandWellbeing](#)



12:41 PM · Apr 26, 2022 · Twitter Web App

[View Tweet analytics](#)

3 Retweets 16 Likes

**saoltagroup**  
@saoltagroup

World Hand Hygiene Day 2022 is being marked in [#Roscommon](#) University Hospital with an awareness and information stand

Good hand hygiene is one of the greatest protections for our health and the health of our families 🙋

[#HandHygiene](#) | [@HSELive](#)



World Hand Hygiene Awareness Day 2022 in RUH

Ursula Morgan and 2 others

2:50 PM · May 5, 2022 · Twitter Web App

[View Tweet analytics](#)

11 Likes

**saoltagroup**  
@saoltagroup

Welcoming Angela Fitzgerald, [@HIQA](#) CEO and colleagues to [#UHG](#) to mark the fifth National Inpatient Experience Survey which is underway. Patients in hospital this month will be invited to take part in the survey in June

[#PatientExperience](#) | [@careexperience](#)



10:52 AM · May 23, 2022 · Twitter Web App

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1 Retweet 1 Quote Tweet 19 Likes

**saoltagroup**  
@saoltagroup

As part of [@UNICEF](#) "Get a Vaccine Give a Vaccine" campaign this flu season our wonderful [@saoltagroup](#) staff donated 7,240 vaccines towards global [#polio](#) eradication

📷 UNICEF Ireland Ambassador and former Galway hurler Joe Canning [@JoeyCan88](#), Pamela Normoyle and Paul Hooton in UHG



Galway Bay FM and 5 others

5:11 PM · May 27, 2022 · Twitter Web App

[View Tweet analytics](#)

3 Retweets 1 Quote Tweet 21 Likes

**saoltagroup**  
@saoltagroup

Staff and management in Portlincula University Hospital had very useful meetings with HSE CEO [@paulreiddublin](#) today - highlighting Enhanced Community Care services operating between the hospital and the community

[#SláinteCare](#) | [@HSELive](#) | [@CHO2west](#)



4:54 PM · May 31, 2022 · Twitter Web App

[View Tweet analytics](#)

7 Retweets 2 Quote Tweets 53 Likes



## Chief Executive Officer Saolta Group

Dear colleagues

As we enter the summer months, I wanted to take this opportunity to briefly update you on reforms taking place in the health service with the establishment of the Regional Health Areas.



Tony Canavan, CEO

As you are aware the Minister for Health announced the formation of six new Regional Health Areas (RHAs) in July 2019 in line with the recommendations of the 2017 Sláintecare Report. The report outlined "the geographical alignment of Hospital Groups and Community Health Organisation ... to support population-based health planning and delivery".

A map outlining the six new RHAs can be found on the next page. As part of these structural changes, the Saolta Group will be incorporated into the new Regional Health Area F which includes all of Community Healthcare West (Galway, Mayo and Roscommon) and part of CHO1 (Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal).

The counties of Cavan and Monaghan currently in CHO1 will be part of Area A going forward.

Each new RHA will be able to plan, resource, fund and deliver health and social care services in their area. This will result in improved patient care, improved governance and improved accountability.

Integration is not new and there are many reasons why this approach would work particularly well in the West and North West. The Saolta Group has for many years had a close working relationship with our health sector colleagues.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Group worked collaboratively with the CH West, CHO1, the National Ambulance Services, Public Health and others in the delivery of the Vaccination Programme and Covid Testing Centres.

The Group is also currently working closely with the CHOs on the development of the Enhanced Community Care Programmes and the delivery of the Sláintecare Integration Fund Projects.

We hope to build on this with the establishment of the new RHAs over the next 12-18 months.

If you would like further information of the new Regional Health areas, it is available on the Sláintecare website.

Tony Canavan  
Chief Executive Officer

## Chief Operations Officer Saolta Group

Dear colleagues

As we reach the half way point of 2022, I want to take the opportunity to thank staff for your unstinting dedication to your roles.

The pressures on our sites remain with high ED attendances continuing at all our hospitals and an increasing level of COVID-19 again. The Minor Injury Unit in Roscommon is also seeing high attendances.

Across the group we continue to strive to meet scheduled care wait time targets. The deadline for Saolta to achieve the mid-year maximum wait time targets is the 30th June. The requirement is that "no patient will wait more than 48 months for their first outpatient appointment and no patient will wait more than 24 months for an inpatient, day case or scope procedure".

While this target is significant given the continuing pressures on our sites, we are working across all our hospitals to achieve the highest possible levels of access for patients.

The Enhanced Community Care programme continues to roll out across our region. Earlier this year HSE CEO Paul Reid visited some of the services across Galway and Mayo speaking to staff and service users about the huge benefits to patients.

The focus of this programme is shifting care from the acute hospital to the community where it is safe to do so. Working together, Community Services, Primary Care General Practitioners and Acute Hospital teams will provide population based services in the community, through Multi-Disciplinary Teams at Community Healthcare Network level.

There has been some welcome news as long awaited projects have come to fruition across our sites.

Two new replacement orthopaedic operating theatres on the Merlin Park site, which cost €10.57m to design, build and equip, were used for the first time in June. The new theatres are required to restore full elective orthopaedic procedures and address orthopaedic waiting lists.

The new cardiothoracic ward in UHG also opened in recent weeks. It is a state-of-the-art dedicated ward which will allow the highest standard of care for our patients.

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly TD opened a new Diabetes Centre at Sligo University Hospital. This new centre allows for more timely access to Consultant clinical expertise and will reduce the admission and length of stay rates in SUH.

MUH saw an enhancement of biochemistry lab equipment in June which will lead to faster turnaround times for test results.

In PUH construction work commenced on the 50 bedded replacement ward block last month. Building works are also at an advanced stage to accommodate the replacement CT which is due for delivery in early September.

Work is progressing on the delivery of the expansion of renal dialysis services in LUH.

I hope you all get to enjoy a well-earned break this summer.

Ann Cosgrove  
Chief Operations Officer



Ann Cosgrove, COO

Map of six new Regional Health Areas



**SláinteCare.**  
Right Care. Right Place. Right Time.



70 km  
40 mls



Z-53211 OSI 030601

**Table: Details of the Counties, CHOs<sup>1</sup>, LHOs and Hospitals in each of the six new regional health areas**

Geography	CHO Area covered	Counties/LHOs (Local Health Offices)	Hospitals (Model 4 hospitals in bold <sup>2</sup> )	Population (Census 2016, rounded)
A	All of CHO 9  Part of CHO 8 [Meath, Louth]  Part of CHO 1 [Cavan <sup>3</sup> , Monaghan]	Dublin North Central, North West Dublin, North Dublin,  Meath, Louth,  Cavan/Monaghan	<b>Beaumont Hospital</b> Cappagh National Orthopaedic Hospital Cavan Monaghan Hospital Connolly Hospital Blanchardstown Louth County Hospital, Dundalk <b>Mater Misericordiae University Hospital</b> Our Lady's Hospital Navan Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Drogheda Rotunda Hospital Dublin	1,080,000
B	All of CHO 7  Part of CHO 8 [Laois, Offaly, Longford, Westmeath]	Dublin South City, Dublin South West, Dublin West, Kildare/West Wicklow,  Laois/ Offaly Longford/Westmeath	Coombe Women & Infants University Hospital Midland Regional Hospital Mullingar Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise Midland Regional Hospital Tullamore Naas General Hospital <b>Tallaght University Hospital</b> <b>St. James's Hospital</b> St. Luke's Hospital, Rathgar	1,000,000
C	All of CHO 6  All of CHO 5	Dublin (South East), Dun Laoghaire, Wicklow,  Wexford, Carlow/Kilkenny, Waterford, South Tipperary	Lourdes Orthopaedic Hospital Kilcreene National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street Royal Victoria Eye & Ear Hospital St. Columcille's Hospital St. Luke's General Hospital Kilkenny St. Michael's Hospital, Dun Laoghaire <b>St. Vincent's University Hospital</b> South Tipperary General Hospital <b>University Hospital Waterford</b> Wexford General Hospital	900,000
D	All of CHO 4	West Cork, Cork South Lee, Cork North Lee, North Cork, Kerry	Bantry General Hospital <b>Cork University Hospital</b> Cork University Maternity Hospital Mallow General Hospital Mercy University Hospital South Infirmary-Victoria University Hospital University Hospital Kerry	690,000
E	All of CHO 3	Limerick, Clare, North Tipperary/East Limerick	Croom Hospital Limerick Ennis Hospital Nenagh Hospital St. John's Hospital Limerick <b>University Hospital Limerick</b> University Maternity Hospital Limerick	390,000
F	All of CHO2  Part of CHO 1 [Sligo, Leitrim, Donegal]	Galway, Roscommon, Mayo,  Sligo/Leitrim <sup>3</sup> , Donegal	<b>Galway University Hospitals</b> Letterkenny University Hospital Mayo University Hospital Portiuncula University Hospital Roscommon University Hospital Sligo University Hospital	710,000

<sup>1</sup> CHO: Community Healthcare Organisations<sup>2</sup> **Model 4 hospital**: This type of hospital provides regular acute and elective inpatient and ambulatory care, managing high acuity procedures and patients, cancer care and single national surgical specialities; and there is an Emergency Department.<sup>3</sup> West county Cavan: A small portion of west county Cavan continues to be aligned with Sligo/Leitrim for health services.

# Update from the Saolta Project Management Office

## Building Change Management Expertise across our Organisation

In healthcare we are working in a constantly changing environment and need to be able to embrace change and service improvement across all of our services to provide Patient-centred co-ordinated care.

The PMO is working closely with the National Change and Innovation Function, CHO1 and Community Healthcare West in supporting the development of further change management expertise across the Saolta Group of Hospitals. Hospital Managers, MCANs, Clinical Directorates and other group functions have been requested to nominate individuals who will act as Change Management Champions to take part in education with a view to embedding continuous change and a community of practice/change management network across the organisation.

In parallel to this, the development of an updated webpage to support project and change management is nearing completion, which will provide a valuable resource to those engaged in change management at the front line. If you would like to know more please contact us on [pmo.saolta@hse.ie](mailto:pmo.saolta@hse.ie)



## Mainstreaming Sláintecare Projects

Previous editions of the newsletter have outlined the success of the Sláintecare projects in the delivery of integrated care initiatives, hospital avoidance and care close to home where safe and appropriate. We have just received notification of the approval to mainstream the following three very successful Saolta-led projects:

- **Telemedicine for Cystic Fibrosis Patients** - GUH/CHO1 and Community Healthcare West
- **Urology Proof of Concept** - Saolta/CHO1 and Community Healthcare West
- **Pain Management Education Programme** - SUH/CHO1  
In addition to other Sláintecare Projects (already main streamed under the Enhanced Community Services Programme), we look forward to transitioning these projects to core service delivery and continuing to deliver very positive benefits to patients. Congratulations to all concerned.



## Evaluation of the Saolta Integrated Governance Project (SIGP) and MCAN Model

The process for evaluation of the Saolta Integrated Governance Project has commenced and will involve a mixed method approach of a survey, 1:1 interviews and focus groups. The key objective is to identify both the positives and challenges from the implementation of the Cancer and Women's and Children's MCANs to date. From this we will be applying the learning to the further roll out of MCANs across the organisation.

## Enhanced Community Care Programme

Saolta PMO is continuing to support the rollout of the Integrated Care Programme for Chronic Disease and Integrated Care Programme for Older Persons in collaboration with our community colleagues in Community Healthcare West and CHO1.

The Saolta/CHW Steering Group held their first blended in person/virtual meeting on Tuesday 03 May. Recruitment is ongoing and acute and community post holders are being on-boarded. The Cardiology, Diabetes and Respiratory Implementation Groups are progressing the initial pathways and working through the referral, governance and treatment processes. Saolta and CHW held their first joint Patient Engagement session on 29 June and are planning further sessions in the Autumn.

In CHO1 Integrated Groups have been established in both Sligo and Letterkenny to lead the implementation of the respective initiatives on a local basis. A virtual information session took place for both acute and community staff on Thursday 23 June.

## National Trauma Implementation Programme

Saolta is continuing to work with the National Trauma Programme Implementation Team in the implementation of GUH as a Trauma Unit with Specialist Services (TUSS) and also in the specification for Trauma Units across a number of our Model 3 hospitals during 2022 and for 2023.

This will require both additional investment and working differently in the implementation of the National Trauma Programme recommendations for better trauma services. Further details to follow.



# Women's and Children's Managed Clinical and Academic Network (MCAN)

Here a brief recap on the past few months which have been busy for the hospital sites and MCAN.

Q1 Maternity Network meeting held with NWIHP in support of the roll out and resources of Saolta Patient Services.

## **BUSINESS CASE APPROVAL/DEVELOPMENT**

We are delighted to advise that the Department of Reproductive Medicine commenced services on 16 May in UHG and will manage all fertility related referrals for the Saolta Group.

The service will provide female and male fertility investigations, fertility related surgery and a follicle tracking service. Funding is not currently in place for advanced assisted reproduction services, patients requiring intra uterine insemination, IVF, ICSI, donor sperm and or donor egg service will be referred onwards appropriately.

The development of this regional service in Galway has been identified by NWIHP as a key component in the deployment of Phase 1 of its Model of Care for Infertility Services in Ireland with six such hubs being developed around the country over the course of 2020/2021.

- Dr Nikhil Purandare, Clinical Lead, Department of Reproductive Medicine.
- Dr Una Conway, Consultant, Department of Reproductive Medicine.

## **CLINICAL CARE INTEGRATION/GROUP PRIORITY PROJECTS**

The Saolta Group Strategy prioritised a number of projects for progression over the next few years and to meet the Executive Council reporting deadline and support the Saolta Project reporting process, the MCAN is submitting regular monthly project updates:

### ***PUH and UHG Maternity Services Integration Project***

It was recommended that the Saolta Group establish a maternity network to allow the sharing of expertise within the network in order to strengthen the operational resilience of smaller units such as PUH and to enable such units to be supported so as to provide safe, quality services.

### ***Saolta Critically Ill and Injured Child Project (SCIIICP)***

The SCIIICP commenced in December 2021. The aim of this project is to ensure that robust structures, systems, processes and resources are available in the Saolta University Health Care Group to effectively manage the critically ill and injured child. The objectives of the project will be achieved through a number of work streams.

## **STRATEGY**

The National Clinical Programme for Paediatrics and Neonatology have completed visiting Saolta hospital sites and have met with key stakeholders on each site to get an understanding of paediatric services across the Saolta Group and how it aligns to the MOC.

The NCP now welcome a detailed discussion with the Saolta Executive on the future direction of service provision and the plans to develop integrated services across the local health system for children within the Saolta Group.

## **GOVERNANCE**

Dedicated networking for the future vision of the women's and children's services will see a shift toward information sharing with dedicated network development in Meetings Management:

**Gynaecology Steering Group** is now up and running, chaired by Prof John Morrison and is reviewing Gynaecology Outpatients Services, Ambulatory Gynae, PMB Pathway, Reproductive Medicine Fertility Hub, Gynaecological Oncology Pathways, Specialist Menopause Clinic, Urogynaecology, TOP/Colposcopy KPI's. We continue to work with NWIHP – currently monitoring and capture KPIs.

**Saolta Paediatric Steering Group** held its first meeting in February with a focus on governance, MCAN role description, Data collection and QPS (ED Pathway).

**Saolta Neonatology Steering Group** is well into its second year and has welcomed guest speakers, data reporting, standardisation of guidelines and patient/family-centred experience as monthly agenda items. A Saolta Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Study Day is being planned for the Saolta Group around October 2022.

**Saolta Maternity Steering Group** held its first meeting in February when Prof Morrison outlined the new format of the Maternity Steering Group going forward. Terms of Reference, aims of the meeting and data collection were discussed.

**Paediatric Diabetes Network Meeting**—the progression of this network is planned to accelerate improvement by facilitating the sharing of best practice, knowledge and expertise. The network has already been established and has had bi-annual meetings throughout 2019 and monthly virtual meetings restarted since October 2020. This accelerates improvement by enabling participants to adopt or adapt successful practices in their own context rather than developing them from scratch.

Saolta hosted its second interactive Diabetes Network Meeting which was opened by Consultant Paediatric Endocrinologist, Dr Niamh McGrath along with informative talks from multiple guest speakers.

Siobhán Horkan, Director of Paediatric Nursing reviewed and agreed the Terms of Reference and the agreed work stream for this Network.

# Cancer Managed Clinical and Academic Network (MCAN)

## Western Region Education Network (WREN) Meeting

The Saolta Cancer MCAN held a very successful WREN meeting in Sligo in May (photo 1). The meeting was officially opened by the Saolta CEO and colleagues attended from across the Group and beyond.

**Day 1** focused on Saolta Cancer MCAN and cancer research, and **Day 2** focused on case study presentations. Both days provided a lively platform for discussion, debate, education and learning. Prof Risteard O'Laoide, Director, NCCP gave an overview of the strategic direction of the NCCP; Prof Michael Kerin, Director, Saolta Cancer MCAN presented future direction and opportunities available to enhance cancer care in the Saolta region. Sessions were chaired by Associate Directors of the Network Dr Andy Hodgson, SUH and Dr Gerry O'Dowd, LUH; Paul Hooton, Chief Director of Nursing and Midwifery; and Olive Gallagher, DON, Saolta Cancer MCAN.

Presentations included:

- Dr Sean Hynes on Molecular Pathology
- Dr Michael McCarthy and Ms Helen O'Reilly on the journey ahead to achieve OECl Accreditation and Designation status.
- Ms Caitriona Duggan, ANP Oncology, PUH on Nursing Research opportunities.
- Dr Maura Dowling, Senior Lecturer, School of Nursing and Midwifery on the opportunities for building nursing research capacity.
- Ms Margaret Burke, Cancer Research Nurse, SUH on local research activity.
- Prof Janusz Krawczyk, Consultant Haematologist, Cluster Lead for the Advanced Therapies and Cancer Research group at Saolta and NUI on Clinical trials.
- Ms Emer Hennessy, Cancer Centre Research Manager, NUI Galway and Saolta Cancer MCAN on research outputs and OECl.
- Prof Tim O'Brien, Professor of Medicine, NUI Galway on 20 years of Research and Education in the west of Ireland.

The Saolta Cancer Nursing Research group was launched on Day 1 (photo 2) with representation from across the region. The session was brought to a close on a nostalgic note by Professor Margaret Murray reflecting on her experiences over the years at GUH and highlighting how far cancer care has advanced during this time.



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3

**Day 2** brought a more mixed session across specialities from endocrinology, orthopaedics, general surgery, medicine and anaesthesia. The cancer focus in this session came from Christina Callaghan, Clinical Nurse Specialist Acute Oncology, SUH, with an acute care case study, discussing the benefits and challenges of the recently introduced essential service. The session came to end with an update on NUI School of Medicine by Prof Larry Egan. The next WREN will be held in Galway in December.

## Adolescent and Young Adults (AYA) Designation

In May, the cancer centre at UHG was designated one of three AYA centres in the country, with the Saolta Cancer MCAN General Manager attending the official NCCP launch in Dublin.

## OECl

Over the last few months we have completed the OECl accreditation and designation application which will allow us to begin our self-assessment process. This self-assessment will enable us to identify essential quality improvements to enhance the delivery of cancer care.

In June, Helen O'Reilly, GUH OECl Coordinator and Dr Michael McCarthy Consultant Oncologist, attended the OECl Oncology conference in Valencia, Spain, representing the UHG Cancer Centre alongside members of the Trinity St James and Beaumont RCSI Cancer centres. This conference provides opportunities for Cancer Centres across Europe to work together to promote shared learning, innovation and enhanced quality for patient care.

## Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy Model of Care

In June Prof Maccon Keane, Associate Director of the MCAN and NCCP National Clinical Lead for Medical Oncology and Pauline McGough, Business Manager Saolta Cancer MCAN, attended the launch of the NCCP's Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy (SACT) Model of Care which sets out the future strategic direction for the delivery of SACT services in Ireland. Prof Keane has been extensively involved in the development of the SACT Model of Care with the NCCP over the last few years. Photo 3.

## New Appointment

Finally, The Saolta Cancer MCAN is delighted to welcome Jackie Lillis, Quality and Patient Safety to the team and wish her well in her new role.

## Research and Awards Day

Staff from Galway University Hospitals gathered together to showcase their academic achievements in research and innovation during the hospitals research and awards day. The event included over 120 submissions from staff across all disciplines, including doctors, HSCPs, nursing, midwifery and QI.

The event, which is in its seventh year, is inter-professional and coincides with the end of the doctors training year. It allows GUH and the Saolta University Health Care Group to highlight, celebrate, and reward the work of our trainee colleagues.

The day comprised of a mix of research and clinic case presentations, both oral and poster. As well as high numbers of submissions a large number of the clinical staff from across the hospital will attend the sessions.

Among the submissions for this year's event were telehealth rehabilitation for the management of long Covid symptoms, a structured eating programme for the management of patients with swallowing difficulties, a well baby breastfeeding clinic and a bespoke 3D printed attachment to deliver CPAP to a patient with a laryngectomy.

Winners included Dr Catriona Reddan who was awarded the consultants medal for the best overall research performed by a registrar in GUH 2022. She is a geriatric higher specialty trainee and undertook work with her mentor Professor Martin O'Donnell, Dean of CMNMHS, NUI Galway.

Dr Ellen Walsh was presented with the Professor Ciaran McCarthy Award. This is the 19th time the Ciaran McCarthy Medal has been awarded. It is named after a former Professor and Dean of Medicine who was formative in developing educational structures at GUH. It recognises an outstanding trainee in the Galway RCPI basic internal medicine training scheme.

Ms Ciara Dolan, Physiotherapist Clinical Specialist GUH was presented with the Wil Van Der Putten Award. Named for Prof Van Der Putten who was a pioneer in supporting academia, this medal recognises research work undertaken by the health and social care professionals. Ms Ciara Dolan, respiratory clinical specialist physiotherapist, accepted the award on behalf of a team that demonstrated amazing innovation in developing bespoke equipment for a patient with a laryngectomy requiring CPAP.

Ms Aine Binchey, ANP in Neonatology, was awarded the Director of Nursing and Midwifery Medal. Aine and her colleagues have an outstanding record of research that has led to significant quality improvements in neonatal care. The QI Award went to Mr Pdraig McGettrick SpR ID and his team for Improving the Post Exposure Pathway in GUH: A Quality Improvement Project.

Dr Sean Donohue, an Infectious Disease trainee working in respiratory and general medicine for this year, was awarded the Prof Patrick Finnegan Medal. Prof Finnegan, a retired respiratory consultant and Dean of Medicine was a renowned clinician and educator and this medal is awarded by vote to the most outstanding medical registrar in GUH.



It reflects humanistic and leadership skills as much as clinical skills and Sean is a worthy recipient. He joins a long line of outstanding young doctor who have been awarded this medal.

The Certificate of Merit for Research was awarded to Dr Marcus Jee for establishing a Multi-disciplinary In-situ Simulation Education Programme for Paediatric Emergency Scenarios.

A commendation was given to Dr Lee who is an Emergency Department registrar who has undertaken excellent work in inter-professional training in Paediatric emergencies. Note was made of his engaging and novel presentation skills. The best poster presentation went to Dr Cameron Forward, a respiratory registrar, for work undertaken with Dr Bob Rutherford.

The event was organised, facilitated, and coordinated by the Saolta University Health Care Group Academic Office. Prof Anthony O'Regan, Chief Academic Officer for the Saolta University Health Care Group said; "The Research and Awards Day gives our incredible staff the opportunity to showcase and present their academic work. It also allows Saolta to recognise the research, innovation and quality improvement that is being carried out daily across our hospital site.

"This provides a wonderful platform for engagement and collaboration across the professions. " The event will also allow all staff to see the remarkable work being done by their colleagues throughout the hospital. The event also facilitates mentoring and feedback for all participants.

"In past years as well as more traditional research projects, our staff have showcased innovative approaches from using Artificial Intelligence in diagnostics, to the development of significant service improvements based on our novel Quality Improvement programme. In Covid we saw innovations in treatments and adaptations of equipment for ventilation and this year we see the use of 3D printers to allow for treatment of patients and telehealth providing remote support for patients," added Prof O'Regan.

## 'Create While You Wait' in the Paediatric Outpatient Department at UHG

Helium Arts, the children's arts and health charity which aims to transform the healthcare experience of children, has recently launched an outpatients programme in UHG to support children and young people who are managing life-long medical conditions to access creative activities while they wait to see the doctor and nurse.

Professional artist from Helium Arts, Yvonne Cullivan, has been designing bespoke creative activity packs and delivering art engagements in the outpatient department. This helps to brighten the atmosphere of the waiting area and provides distraction and stress relief for young people and families who may feel anxious or nervous about attending their hospital appointments.

Yvonne Cullivan, Helium Arts' Artist said, "The effect of having an artist present in the outpatient waiting space is immediate. Staff and families alike are welcoming and willing to engage with me. Toddlers have the chance to play with materials, with me or their parents, to keep them focused and entertained.

"I have seen this instantly calm children down and stop their tears if they have been distressed at all during their visit. Children and young people have been creating beautiful artworks with focus and pride, sometimes with their parents or guardians helping out. It is an opportunity for choice and expression for them and I feel that our engagement is really valuable in that moment."

Helium Arts' Artist, Yvonne Cullivan and Cecily Forde-Cassidy, CNM2, Paediatric Dept, UHG.

Margaret Flannery, Director of Saolta Arts said, "We are delighted to welcome Helium Arts into the Outpatients Department at UHG and we will be running a similar programme in Mayo University Hospital. In addition Helium Arts are organising day Summer and Autumn Art Camps in Galway, Castlebar, Roscommon and Ennis for children and young people with underlying or complex medical conditions aged 6-12 years. Staff may refer patients to the art camps or anyone who knows of a family who might benefit from one of the Helium Arts programmes can contact their family liaison officer, Niamh Whelehan, by email [hello@helium.ie](mailto:hello@helium.ie) or phone 083 010 3240."



## International Hand Hygiene Day at PUH

To celebrate International hand hygiene day in PUH, the IPC Nursing Team facilitated a number of events including:

- Hand hygiene education sessions .
- Hand hygiene stand outside the staff canteen in the morning and afternoon.
- The Semmelweis scanner was brought to the clinical areas.
- Patient Hand hygiene awareness: For the month of April and May patients were visited by a member of the IPC team and given hand hygiene information leaflets.

186 staff participated on the day and learnt about their hand rub technique and the use of gel and how essential it is to have a good technique to reduce the risk to our patients.



## Nurses and Midwives across the Saolta Group



In May we celebrated International Day of the Nurse and International Day of the Midwife.

## Menu of Poems by Saolta Arts for Poetry Day

Menu of Poems takes the form of a short anthology of poetry which is distributed annually to healthcare users in a range of healthcare settings. Produced by Saolta Arts on behalf of Arts and Health Co-ordinators Ireland, supported by Poetry Ireland and HSE Health Promotion and Improvement, over 10,000 people in healthcare settings will receive the Menu of Poems on Poetry Day Ireland.

Since its conception in 2008, Menu of Poems has been a positive development in the lives of both patients and those who work in healthcare settings across Ireland. The poetry is circulated on meal trays in hospitals and other healthcare settings with participating healthcare providers organising readings and workshops for Poetry Day Ireland.

Margaret Flannery, Arts Director at Saolta Arts said: 'Menu of Poems continues to grow its audience annually and this year we are delighted to introduce two new elements. Rita Ann Higgins, Poet and Editor of the 2022 Menu of Poems, selected a poem that we will produce in a poster format especially for paediatric health settings and all the poetry is available to listen to online. I would like to thank the poets involved for their recordings as we can reach more people and share the selection widely.'

Click [here](#) for more.



From left: Margaret Flannery, Arts Director, Saolta Arts and Ann Higgins who selected the poems for this year's **Menu of Poems**.

## Diabetes Centre at SUH opened by Minister for Health



Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly TD officially opened a new Diabetes Centre at Sligo University Hospital in May. The new centre consists of five multi-purpose clinic rooms including podiatry clinic room, an education room and a number of offices.

The opening of this new centre allows for a more timely access to Consultant clinical expertise with the introduction of a 24 hour rapid assess Consultant weekly slots. This will reduce the admission and length of stay rates in SUH. Access to both Endocrinologist, Dietician, Clinical Nurse Specialist in a one stop shop will increase patient care and satisfaction rates.

Specialist clinics have also been introduced including transition and young adult clinics, which are running alongside existing services, allowing patients to access multidisciplinary expertise within the one facility.

Minister Donnelly said: "It is a privilege to be in Sligo today to open this new Diabetes Day Unit.

"It is estimated that there are approximately 266,000 people living with diabetes in Ireland and this is set to increase by 5-10 per cent year on year. Thousands of people in this region who have been diagnosed with Diabetes Mellitus will benefit from this new development in Sligo and will have positive patient outcomes as a result.

"Investment such as this is how we are continuing to build a world-class health service that serves the needs of communities long into the future and makes the experiences of patients and their families better."

Click [here](#) for more.

## Collaboration between Croí and UHG

In April Croí launched a collaboration with the Coronary Care Unit in UHG as part of Croí's Heartlink West support service for people living with cardiovascular disease.

Working with the team in the Heart Unit, Croí produced a series of special videos for patients who are receiving care in the Coronary Care Unit. Patients can now watch these informational videos on iPads donated by Croí, with videos covering a wide range of topics including cardiac rehabilitation; diet and exercise post-cardiac event; the emotional impact of a cardiac event or procedure; as well as advice on smoking cessation.

From left: Katie McCormack, CNM Coronary Care Unit, UHG; Sarah Molloy, Senior Staff Nurse, Coronary Care Unit, UHG; Annie Costelloe, Croí Patient and Community Engagement Manager; Dr Lisa Hynes, Croí Head of Health Programmes; and Maeve Frawley, Croí Cardiovascular Nurse Specialist and Heartlink West Nurse Lead.



## BowelScreen launched endoscopy service at MUH



From left: Catherine Donohoe, Hospital Manager, MUH; Dr Donal Tighe, Consultant Gastroenterologist and BowelScreen Clinical Lead, MUH; Fiona Murphy, Chief Executive, National Screening Service; Hilary Coffey Farrell, Programme Manager, BowelScreen; Mary Sheedy, Deputy Manager, BowelScreen; Kathy Stack, Clinical Nurse Specialist, BowelScreen; Prof Eoin Slattery, Consultant Gastroenterologist and Saolta Group Clinical Lead for Endoscopy; and Prof Pádraic Mac Mathuna, Clinical Director of BowelScreen.

BowelScreen, part of the National Screening Service, launched was officially launched at Mayo University Hospital in May with the hospital now performing colonoscopies on behalf of the programme.

MUH joins University Hospital Galway, Letterkenny University Hospital, Roscommon University Hospital, and Sligo University Hospital in providing BowelScreen services for the people of the west of Ireland. Fifteen hospitals across Ireland are now delivering this vital screening service for the national bowel screening programme.

The service launch comes as acute hospital and endoscopy services - regionally and nationwide – continue to navigate the significant impact COVID-19 restrictions and high infection rates have had on operations. It is anticipated that when fully operational, the Saolta University Health Care

Group will deliver around 20% of BowelScreen's colonoscopies per year. BowelScreen conducts around 4,700 colonoscopies per year.

Click [here](#) for more.

## Cubbie Sensory Hub for the Paediatric Unit at UHG

The Paediatric Unit at UHG was delighted to receive a donation of a Cubbie Sensory Hub from Galway Sick Kids Foundation with the support of Galway Atlantaquaria.

Dr Aisling Lyons, Consultant Paediatrician SI Neurodisability said, "The sensory Cubbie has been a fantastic addition to the playroom here in UHG, particularly for children with developmental needs who may become distressed and upset when visiting our outpatient department for an appointment. After spending time in the Cubbie, the child is more settled and able to have a very meaningful clinical visit without distress or anxiety for the child or their parents."

Click [here](#) for more.



From left: Dr Aisling Lyons, Consultant Paediatrician SI Neurodisability; Colm Kennelly, Chair, Galway Sick Kids Foundation; Therese Allen, Treasurer, Galway Sick Kids Foundation; Cecily Cassidy, CNM2, Paediatric Unit; and Nóirín Burke, Director of Education, Galway Atlantaquaria.

## Heart Failure Awareness at RUH

As part of Heart Failure Awareness Week (02 to 08 May), staff from Roscommon University Hospital's Heart Failure Service organised an information stand for people visiting the hospital to provide advice on the signs of heart failure and how it can be treated.

The Heart Failure Service at Roscommon University Hospital started in 2018 to provide a support for patients from Roscommon who previously travelled to Galway for treatment. Since then the service has grown and now has links with University Hospital Galway along with Portiuncula and Mayo University Hospitals. The team includes Dr Ion Ignea, Consultant Physician; Rosemary Thorpe, Clinical Nurse Specialist; Clare Murray and Eleanor Finneran, Cardiac Physiologists, Outpatient Department and Medical Day Services staff and they provide care for approximately 200 patients per year from Roscommon.

The Heart Failure Service is supported by staff from Departments throughout the hospital. Click [here](#) for more.



From left: Eleanor Finneran, Cardiac Physiologist; Dr Ion Ignea, Consultant Physician; and Rosemary Thorpe, Heart Failure Nurse Specialist.

## Paediatric Smart Pump at MUH

Mayo University Hospital has worked with Children's Health Ireland to introduce the use of the CHI paediatric smart pump system to the hospital. A smart pump is an infusion device which uses specific software and a drug library to deliver carefully controlled amounts of medication to a patient through a drip. This system for medication delivery is designed to reduce errors and standardise how medications are prepared and delivered. Use of the CHI smart pump drug library provides a very safe system for delivery of high risk medications to sick infants and children and is the new standard of care in Ireland. MUH is the first hospital outside of CHI or specialised neonatal services to use this technology for children in hospital.

The availability of the smart pump system in Mayo University Hospital will also ensure that the sickest paediatric patients who need to travel to one of the paediatric intensive care units in CHI have uninterrupted delivery of medication while in transit and when they arrive in CHI. Click [here](#) for more.



## Parents' Room in the Neonatal Unit at UHG

The Neonatal Unit at University Hospital Galway has recently upgraded a room which is used by parents who have to travel long distances from home to see their babies who are undergoing intensive care treatment.

Dr Johannes Letshwiti, Consultant Neonatologist at UHG said, "The Neonatal Unit here in Galway is the regional unit for the West and North West. We care for babies from as far away as Donegal to the North and East to the Midlands. The distances involved means it can be difficult for parents to visit every day, particularly if their babies are with us for a substantial length of time.

"We care for babies who are born prematurely and the length of time babies spend with us ranges from 1 day to over 4 months. Most of the infants who stay with us for few months have birth weight less than 1500g and those born weighing less than 1000g stay even longer. Click [here](#) for more.



From left: Helen Murphy, Director of Midwifery; Dr Johannes Letshwiti, Consultant Neonatologist and Irene Glynn, CNM2, NICU.

## Stroke Signs and Symptoms Advice from LUH

As part of May Stroke Awareness Month, staff from the Acute Stroke Unit at Letterkenny University Hospital provided advice on the signs and symptoms of stroke and advised people to seek immediate medical attention if they, or a family member, develop any of the following:

- ⇒ Numbness, weakness or drooping of face
- ⇒ Weakness or numbness of arm and/or leg
- ⇒ Difficulty speaking or slurring of words
- ⇒ Loss of vision in one or both eyes
- ⇒ Sudden difficulty in walking or problems with balance

Dr Ashfaque Memon, Consultant Stroke Physician at LUH said, "Treatment of acute stroke is highly time-dependent and the quicker you get to hospital after you notice any symptoms, the more chances you have of a successful recovery.

The steps we can take to reduce our risk of stroke. About 80% of strokes are preventable and we can start today to improve our lifestyle and reduce the risk of stroke.

"These steps to reduce the risk of stroke include taking moderate physical exercise like going for a brisk walk; talking to your GP about monitoring your blood pressure, your cholesterol and checking for signs of diabetes. Another way to reduce your risk of stroke is to eat a healthy diet, reduce alcohol and reduce weight if need be. And as we always advise, if you are a smoker, please consider quitting. You can get lots of advice and supports by going to [quit.ie](http://quit.ie).

"If you notice any signs or symptoms of stroke, please seek immediate attention by calling 999 or 112.

"The Acute Stroke Unit at LUH opened in April last year. It is an 8 bed unit which is used to care for patients who suffer from stroke where they can get specialised care from a multidisciplinary team including a Stroke Consultant, a Stroke Registrar, a Stroke Specialist Nurse, nursing staff and a dedicated Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist and Dietitian. We have cared for more than 300 patients since the unit opened and the benefits for patients in terms of their clinical outcome and the way they are able to resume daily living after receiving care from the team here in the hospital is significant."

## Day case procedure to reduce uncontrolled blood pressure at GUH

Galway University Hospitals is the first hospital in the country to introduce a new minimally invasive day case procedure to reduce blood pressure in patients. This means that patients arrive in the hospital in the morning, have the procedure and are able to return home the same day.

Prof Faisal Sharif, Consultant Cardiologist at GUH said, "We are probably the only hospital anywhere carrying out this procedure as a day case. Certainly we are the only hospital in the world carrying out the procedure, which is called renal artery denervation, using a product manufactured by Medtronic here in Galway.

"We are using renal artery denervation to help patients with high uncontrolled blood pressure or hypertension which is a major risk factor for stroke, heart attack, vascular disease and chronic kidney disease.

"Approximately 35% of the adult population in Ireland have hypertension and around one third of these patients are taking medication but their blood pressure is still uncontrolled. If we are able to control blood pressure we are able to reduce the risk of debilitating side effects. Even a small reduction in blood pressure can lead to a significant reduction of the risk of stroke or heart attack.

"We have participated in a number of clinical trials for renal artery denervation here in GUH that have shown reduction in blood pressure. Based on these results, renal artery denervation is now being carried out as a day case procedure.

"This has huge benefits for the patients in terms of reduced disruption to their lives, recovery at home and we are not dependent on the availability of beds for an overnight stay which can be a challenge with the current demands on inpatient care."

Click [here](#) for more.



Prof Faisal Sharif, Consultant Cardiologist at GUH.

## HSE CEO visits Galway, Mayo and Roscommon



HSE CEO Paul Reid visited services and colleagues in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon at the start of the summer. The aim of the visits and meetings was to see first-hand the work being carried out by HSE staff working in services like Sláintecare Healthy Communities and to see how Enhanced Community Care (ECC) planning is progressing.

Speaking about this trip, the CEO said, "I'm delighted to be here to meet staff in counties Galway, Mayo and Roscommon, to hear about the great work that is happening and being implemented by Saolta Hospital Group and Community Healthcare West.

"Meeting staff and hearing the innovative ways they are working to benefit the lives of patients is a great way for me to get first hand feedback and an opportunity to thank them for all their hard work over the last few years. Despite the interruption the pandemic caused, staff have progressed development of services that will benefit all. I look forward to visiting many more colleagues and patients in other parts of the country throughout the summer."

## SUH at EFIC Congress 2022

The Pain Management Education Programme team at SUH took to the European stage to highlight interdisciplinary approaches to chronic pain management.

The European Pain Federation Congress (EFIC) was hosted by Ireland in Dublin in April. EFIC aims to improve research, education and clinical management of pain and serve as an authoritative, science-based resource on issues related to pain and its treatment. The 2022 EFIC theme was "Targeting Pain and its Comorbidities in the Digital Age".

SUH use a biopsychosocial approach to pain management, which means a 'whole person' approach. This combines the specialist experience of Patrick Finan, Clinical Psychology; Patrick Gilmartin, Clinical Specialist Physiotherapy; and Edel Parkes, Pain Specialist Nurse to assist patients to manage their chronic pain condition. The team formed in 2018 and have managed group therapy in SUH, Manorhamilton, Letterkenny and Nazareth House, Sligo.

To continue patient therapy during COVID-19, the team developed a digital virtual programme 'VPMEP' which was launched in August 2020. Using WebEx the team connects with patients to provide education and group therapy in the patient's own home.

The online programme has many benefits including ease of access for patients who otherwise have lengthy journeys to attend a face-to-face programme.

It also allows the patients to attend the programme when restricting or with mild symptoms of COVID-19.

The SUH team presented their development and experience of using 'VPMEP' as an option for interdisciplinary pain management to the EFIC and showcased the benefits of complementing their disciplines to benefit chronic pain patients and the advantages of utilising digital health as a means of providing effective, efficient care.



From left: Patrick Gilmartin, Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist; Edel Parkes CNS; Brid O'Connor, Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist; and Patrick Finan, Senior Clinical Psychologist.

# Replacement Orthopaedic Theatres for MPUH



Two new replacement orthopaedic operating theatres in Merlin Park University Hospital, which cost €10.57m to design, build and equip, were used for the first time on the 10 June 2022.

Prior to the opening of the new theatres, there was only one orthopaedic theatre available in GUH to provide elective orthopaedic procedures. The two new replacement theatres are required to restore full elective orthopaedic procedures in Merlin Park University Hospital and address orthopaedic waiting lists.

Construction of the 620m<sup>2</sup> theatre building began in March 2021 following a public procurement tendering for a main contractor. The build consists of two operating theatres, two anaesthesia rooms, a recovery area and other ancillary accommodation to support the theatre suites. Click [here](#) for more.

## SUH Maternity Steering Committee

A steering committee has been set up in Sligo University Hospital, which includes staff representation from all areas in the maternity service. The aim of the committee is to develop quality initiatives within the maternity service.

### SUH Maternity Feedback Comment Cards

Maternity feedback comment cards were launched on 01 June for all postnatal women to help the department evaluate and improve the care we provide. SUH is providing comment cards in all discharge packs so women can express their views on the standard of care they received. This card is anonymous and incorporates all aspects of the pregnancy journey.

### Face-to-Face Forum

The steering committee is planning a face-to-face forum for women who recently attended the unit or are currently attending to participate in. The ideas generated at this forum will help plan and further improve the Maternity Service at the hospital.

**Thank you...**

For taking the time to fill out this comment card. On the back of this card you will find 2 sections to complete.

1. Please rate the overall service you received using the scale to rate each.
2. The further comments section invites you to leave comments, compliments or complaints.

It would be helpful if you mention the area you are commenting about eg labour Ward/NICU etc... in the comment box

- Antenatal Clinic
- Fetal assessment Unit
- Labour Ward
- NICU
- Maternity Ward (Antenatal & Post Natal)

If you need to make a complaint you may need to contact the Consumer services (Contact Details below) in the Hospital and you will be guided through the correct procedure.

**Amanda Gaffney**  
Tel: 071 9174517  
Email: [Amanda.gaffney@hse.ie](mailto:Amanda.gaffney@hse.ie)

Sligo University Hospital is committed to providing excellent patient care in the most efficient way. The experiences of our patients can help us in making a difference to our services

**Comment Card**

We would like you to comment on the quality of the service you received by filling out this evaluation form, this feedback will help us to improve the service we provide for you and your family. We appreciate your honest responses on this Patient Survey form

This card will be collected from you prior to your discharge, otherwise you can leave this in the locked box at midwives station. Thank you.




## Pride Month at GUH



Staff Celebrating Pride month at Galway University Hospitals.

In June the GUH Pride Working Group organised a month of activities, talks and events. Orla Sheil, OT at the hospital and a member of the GUH Pride Working Group said, "Pride month is an opportunity to increase awareness of healthcare issues and to educate staff to services available to LGBT+ patients. While there has been significant progress in Ireland to reduce discrimination against the LGBT+ community, more work needs to be done. Pride month is a time to both celebrate LGBT+ diversity and educate healthcare workers.

"Many people in Ireland are still feeling afraid to disclose their sexual or gender identity. In June we distributed rainbow lanyards to staff to use to wear with their work ID badges. By choosing to wear the rainbow lanyard, staff can show that GUH offers non-judgmental and inclusive care for all who identify as LGBT+.

"Research has shown healthcare staff wearing a rainbow lanyard helps to actively break down barriers that LGBT+ people may face while accessing healthcare or while at work. In Ireland 75% of LGBT+ people feel that healthcare providers lack knowledge and sensitivity to LGBT+ issues with almost 50% seeking LGBT+ friendly clinicians because of negative experiences. This is something we aim to improve." Click [here](#) for more.

## Staff Step Challenge at PUH



'Staff from Portlincula University Hospital participating in the Steps Challenge'.

## New e-Rostering app at LUH

This app is linked to the e-Rostering system which allows staff to view their duty, request a duty and book A/L from their mobile phone. Staff can view vacant shifts and book into shifts if they want to.

It also features a communication piece which allows organisational news to be circulated to all staff on the app, informing them of updates, surveys and events.



## Biochemistry laboratory equipment for MUH

A major enhancement of biochemistry laboratory equipment in Mayo University Hospital has significantly cut turnaround times for test results.

Over the last two years the biochemistry laboratory in MUH has undergone enormous development with an ambitious project to install a revolutionary automated track analytical system. This is the only Beckman Coulter automated laboratory system used in Ireland and was one of ten in the world at the time of installation.

The busy laboratory in MUH analyses clinical samples to assist in the diagnosis, monitoring and prognosis of a wide range of diseases. The team of medical scientists process 1,500 samples per day, providing a vital diagnostics service to support doctors and nurses in making clinical decisions within both MUH and the many GP practices in the region.

The new track system was installed in June 2021 after significant internal construction works and reconfiguration within the Biochemistry Department was completed. The track analyser machine automates the processing of samples that is usually done by hand, and the main benefit to patients is a much improved turnaround time for test results.

Click [here](#) for more.



To learn more about the Biochemistry Department in Mayo University Hospital watch this short video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7oZC-oYhNA&t=1s>

## ICU Quality Initiative at SUH

In Ireland there are currently three retrieval services that transfer critically ill patients between regional hospitals and tertiary centres for specialised care. The Mobile Intensive Care Ambulance Service (MICAS) transfers critically ill adults; the Irish Paediatric Transfer Service (IPATS) transfers critically ill children from 6 weeks of age; and the National Neonatal Transfer Programme (NNTP) transfers Neonates.

However, apart from NNTP, these services do not operate 24/7. This means that out of hours and when the retrieval service is already operating, the critical care staff of SUH must transfer critically ill patients themselves.

Prior to COVID-19, MICAS provided training on the safety aspects of transferring adult critically ill patients. Topics included physiological effects of acceleration / deceleration on the haemodynamic stability of critical care patients and how to package the patients safety for transfer. Included in this training was rolling simulation sessions on the different possible scenarios that could potentially happen on transfer. However, this vital training was suspended during COVID-19.

To address this gap, a quality initiative was developed in SUH to provide this training to medical and nursing staff of SUH by our critical care team.

Leading out on this initiative was Dr Jonker, Consultant Anaesthesiologist, who gathered a group of advanced trained critical care specialists comprising Consultant Anaesthesiologists, National Ambulance Service personnel and ICU Clinical Facilitator who undertook training to provide the MICAS adult critical care transport training programme.

Since then 12 anaesthetic and ICU nursing staff have completed the training course.

SUH is now the only hospital in Ireland to have a hospital-based team for this training. This is an incredible initiative that we now can offer to all of our critical care staff who may undertake a critical care transfer.



Dr Daniel Mesario, Consultant Anaesthesiologist and Trudy Falconer, Clinical Facilitator ICU.

## #OurPeople

**Name:** Dónal Gill

**Job Title:** Head of the Social Work Department

**Location:** Galway University Hospitals

### How did you get interested in the role of Social Work

Initially I really wanted to be a primary school teacher but my brother had started college at the same time and had gone on to become a mental health nurse. I thought it was amazing how he got to do placements throughout his training in different types of health settings and when I completed my undergraduate degree I started looking at postgraduate courses for health care. At one point I considered going back to study nursing but the thought of starting something from scratch wasn't appealing so decided to pursue Social Work and completed a graduate diploma and Masters to get to where I needed to be!

I think I really enjoyed the idea of a job which you get to interact with different types of people and professionals with a view to supporting your client base to achieve their own goals or support them to stand up for their own rights.

### What is a typical day?

I started working in GUH in 2006 and mainly worked as the social worker with the Neurology team and Older Persons Medicine. In 2013 I changed to a different HSE service and came back to GUH in 2018 as the Principal Social Worker. I work with a fantastic Social Work team who really go over and beyond their role to support and assist patients they work with and their families.

I don't think anyone would say that two days are the same in our role. We all live very different social lives and our experiences are never the same, therefore our work is very varied and I think that adds to why people go into social work in the first place. We could support a patient to have necessary support in place to enhance their discharge in the morning and by lunch respond to a person who is experiencing domestic violence in their personal life to an afternoon where a person may need consular assistance for a visa to travel to another country for clinical treatment.

### If you had to describe your job in three words... or one sentence... what would it be?

Unpredictable, challenging, worthwhile.

### What is the most rewarding part of your job?

The people you meet, in addition to the people you work alongside. You meet a lot of people who say they could not do this job, but at the heart of social work is the desire or wish to help people in need. Crisis can come in many different forms and we all experience crises in different ways. What seems impossible to one person is a walk in the park for another.

Part of my job as a social worker is to slow the pace down with the person I'm working with, to separate fact from fiction and break down a problem into smaller pieces and work with the person to put the plan back together in an effort to meet and overcome whatever challenge is presented. A really important focus of the work is to allow the person themselves to create the solution, which is always within their power to do – they sometimes just need someone to help clear the air to see the solution a little more clearly.

Seeing my colleagues and team achieve a positive outcome for the people and families they work with is the most rewarding. Knowing that someone's rights and self-autonomy is being brought to the fore, listened to, respected and being achieved is a really important part of the job. Situations and resources can place hurdles in the way, but that goal is always our central aim and that continues to be a reason for me to go to get up and out to work and make that happen.



## GP Study Day at GUH

The first GUH GP study day since the onset of COVID-19 took place on 21 May in the Clinical Science Institute. The day was facilitated by Prof Pat Nash, Chief Clinical Director and the GPs had the option to attend the study day in person or online.

On the day, 11 GPs attended in person with a further 25 joining online which was a popular option, particularly for those that would otherwise have to travel a considerable distance.

The GP study day is an important element in the engagement process between the hospital and GPs. It is an opportunity for consultants to meet and update GPs on access, referral pathways and treatments and it has always been a key calendar event in joint working between GPs and hospital consultants.

The study day saw presentations on a number of services delivered in the hospital and provided an opportunity for GPs to feedback and obtain information on services available.



GPs with some of the GUH consultant presenters who attended the GP study day.

Presenters on the day were Mr Kenneth Joyce Consultant Plastic Surgeon; Prof Stewart Walsh, Consultant Vascular Surgeon; Dr Michelle Canavan, Consultant in Geriatric Medicine and Clinical Lead Integrated Care for Older Persons; Dr Bernadette Lynch, Consultant Rheumatologist; and Ms Orla Young, Consultant ENT, Head and Neck Surgeon. Dr David Breen, Consultant in Respiratory Medicine and Mr Alan Soo, Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon concluded the study day with presentations on lung pathways.

GPs welcomed information on new services and pathways and highlighted that the day allows them to meet new consultants to the hospital. Feedback was sought from GPs on areas that they would like information on for future study days. It is planned to host the next study day in October 2022 and biannually going forward.

## “One Step Closer” Patient Flow Workshop

The first Saolta Group Patient flow workshop was held on 31 May in Sligo University Hospital. The workshop was well-represented by all the hospitals within the group with great engagement from all sites.

The aim of patient flow is to streamline the pathway of people during their hospital experience, from the front door right through all aspects of care to discharge.

The workshop was facilitated by Helene Horsnell, Unscheduled Care Lead for the Group supported by the PMO office.

The purpose of the workshop was to identify and agree a standardised approach on how we manage our day-to-day patient flow operations across the Group.

This approach is in line with the 5 Fundamentals Framework which promotes leadership, culture and governance, patient flow pre-admission, patient flow at post-admission, integrated community and hospital services and the use of information to support sustainable performance improvement.

This first workshop looked at the current challenges, solutions to improve and how best to optimise patient flow across the Group.

This work has continued with specific workshops at LUH, PUH, GUH, MUH and SUH. Staff engagement has been outstanding throughout the work. Helene Horsnell, Unscheduled Care Lead said, “I’m delighted to rollout these workshops across all sites. Staff have engaged in the work with enthusiasm and great focus. I look forward to seeing the outcomes from this vital work which will improve our patient experience.”





**Saolta University Health Care Group**  
University Hospital Galway  
Newcastle Road  
Galway

Newsletter.saolta@hse.ie  
www.saolta.ie

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