

Joint Committee
on
Health
Sláintecare

OPENING STATEMENT

Bernard Gloster
Chief Executive Officer
27th September 2023



Introduction

Good morning, Chair, and members of the Committee. Thank you for the invitation to meet with the Committee today and to join with colleagues from the Department of Health in providing an update on our work arising from the Sláintecare policy framework.

I am joined today by my colleagues;

- Mr. Liam Woods, National Director RHA Implementation
- Ms. Sheila McGuinness, National Lead Waiting List Action Plan (Acute Hospitals)
- Ms. Anne Marie Hoey, National Director of HR
- Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer
- Mr. Dean Sullivan, Chief Strategy Officer.

I am supported by senior staff Ms. Sara Maxwell and Mr. Ray Mitchell (PAD).

Previous briefings to this Committee have demonstrated strong progress on aspects of Sláintecare and the overall health reforms. While access remains a challenge and is our central focus, our activity and performance has grown considerably this year. Unprecedented growth in demand for services, also experienced in other jurisdictions, is believed to be associated with pent up demand post the pandemic. It is for this reason that access is challenged at a number of points but also showing signs of some improvements in the right direction.

I want to briefly, at this point, address two matters central to the current implementation of Sláintecare.

Organisation Reform.

The HSE with the approval of the Minister for Health and Government has now moved to recruit six Regional Executive Officers to lead the implementation of Health Regions. These senior post holders will report directly to me.

I have also issued a draft new design for the HSE Centre and National Services. It is my intention to finalise the design by year end then move to implementation in parallel to the establishment of the Health Regions in the period up to September 2024. This is a radical redefinition of the HSE Centre and together with the direct reporting of six Regional Executive Officers to me, represents the most significant delayering of the HSE since its establishment in 2005.

Workforce.

At the end of August 2023, the HSE and Section 38 agencies employed 161,634 people equating to 142,468 Whole Time Equivalents (WTE). That is a nett growth of 4,722 WTE with four months of the year still to be counted. This is a significant growth of 18.9% since December 2019. All staff categories in the current year are ahead of recruitment target.

As we approach 2024 the HSE has a critical task to undertake in consolidating an overall approach to pay and numbers (PNS). There are currently several categories of allocating and tracking employment (Agency, Overtime, Covid, Developments, Routine Replacement etc).

The Public Only Consultant Contract (POCC) continues to attract both new applicants (146) and conversions of existing post holders (379) as of September 6th.

I have previously referenced to the Committee the need for extended services (seven days), and we have commenced engagement with staff representative organisations on an approach to that. I expect this will be of some assistance in the coming months (short term) and more dependably so in 2024.

That concludes my opening remarks.