



Trolley Watch hits headlines

The INMO protest in Drogheda highlights overcrowding and inadequate bed numbers in our hospitals. Ann Keating reports

THE INMO continued to appear in the media over the summer months on issues such as overcrowding in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda; a rise in trolley/ward watch figures; HIQA report; pay for new graduates and Turn off the Red Light campaign.

Protest at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda

The *Irish News* (August 21) reported on a protest held by the INMO at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda – **Nurses hold protest on overcrowding and staffing.** "Nurses have staged a protest to highlight chronic overcrowding and staffing shortages at a Co Louth hospital. Members of the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO) held an hour-long lunchtime protest yesterday at the gates of Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda. Representatives said they wanted to publicly express their concern that the hospital had seen a 55% rise in patients on trolleys in the emergency department this year, with figures having doubled during July alone. The body also claimed the hospital has more than 90 full-time vacancies, causing 'severe problems' for existing staff who were also struggling to cope with an inadequate number of beds." Tony Fitzpatrick, IRO "described conditions for staff and patients as "intolerable", with fears that the situation would only worsen during the winter months." Management has agreed to meet representatives to discuss the crisis.

Trolley/Ward Watch

The *Irish Daily Mirror* (August 9) gave space to the Trolley Watch statistics for the month of July 2007-2014 published by the INMO, which showed an 8% increase overall, under a headline **€5M to tackle trolley crisis – Varadkar's cash injection to ease A&E backlog.** Speaking on the issue, Minister Varadkar said "I monitor the trolley count on a daily basis and

it remains a real problem. The HSE has released €5 million for home care packages and long-term care to speed up the discharge of patients. I look forward to meeting the INMO in September to discuss ways of relieving the problem."

HIQA report

Need for action on HIQA report was a headline in the *Limerick Post* (August 2). "Limerick's St John's hospital and the former county hospitals in Ennis and Nenagh could all play a greater role in easing the overcrowding crisis at University Hospital Limerick's Emergency Department, according to the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation. The union is calling on the HSE to stop dragging its heels in responding to the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) report on University Hospital Limerick which found conditions at the hospital's Emergency Department were putting people's lives at risk."

Pay for new graduates

The *Irish Times* (July 29) ran a headline **Consultants may earn €175,000 under deal** "Hospital consultants working exclusively in the public service would see their salaries increase from €116,000 to €175,000 in stages over a period of about 10 years, under Government pay proposals. The higher payments would come from a combination of staged rises and from long-term increments... The move followed concerns among senior health service management that there was a growing difficulty recruiting and retaining senior doctors in hospitals." Liam Doran, general secretary was quoted in the same article, saying "young nurse graduates were also leaving due to uncompetitive wage rates compared with other English-speaking countries. He said in dealing with consultants, the government was only righting a wrong that it had introduced in 2012 when it cut pay levels. Mr Doran

said the government should also use talks with his union that are currently underway in the Labour Relations Commission to set out its proposals to reverse cuts imposed in the pay structure for nurses over recent years. He said pay of nurse graduates had been reduced by 35% over recent years. The INMO wants the government to scrap a graduate intern scheme under which 1,000 posts are available for two years at between 85% and 90% of the full staff nurse rate."

Turn off the Red Light

A press release issued by Edward Mathews, the INMO's new director of regulation and social policy, regarding the Turn of the Red Light Campaign was covered in the *Leinster Leader* (July 1) under the heading – **TDs must act on recommendations.** "Local TDs must end a 12-month delay and recommit to new laws which would put local pimps out of business by targeting demand for prostitution. Campaigners are asking TDs to act on the unanimous recommendation of the Oireachtas Justice and Equality Committee in June of last year to bring in laws which would focus on the buyers of sex. The recommendations enjoy support across the political sphere and also have the backing of 70 Irish organisations through the Turn Off the Red Light Campaign... Failure to show political leadership on this issue now is not only an act of betrayal against the victims of human trafficking – but will leave Ireland open to becoming a soft target for traffickers as other countries make it more difficult for them to operate."

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