

From the Director of Service Delivery



Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

An Roinn

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta  
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

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Chief Executives HSS Trusts

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Your Ref:  
Our Ref: DS154-06  
Date: 13 November 2006

Dear Colleague

## **EMERGENCY CARE REFORM – DEFINITIONS AND GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK**

The length of time a patient waits for emergency care assessment and treatment is a key quality issue and is a highly visible public indicator of the effectiveness of health services. In this context, the Minister has announced targets to ensure that, by March 2007, all patients waiting in an Emergency Care Department who require admission should be admitted to a ward within 12 hours of arrival and by March 2008, 95% of patients are admitted, transferred or discharged within four hours of arrival at an Emergency Care Department. In order to monitor performance against these targets, it is essential that information is collected, interpreted and recorded in a consistent manner across all Trusts.

The attached document has therefore been developed by the Department's Service Delivery Unit, in conjunction with Boards and Trusts, as a framework to support the reform process.

**It is currently the intention to begin regular monitoring of unscheduled care performance from the start of December. It is therefore important that all staff involved in the management of patients through the unscheduled care pathway are fully conversant with the contents of the attached framework by Friday, 1 December 2006. From that date all emergency care information should be recorded in accordance with the Definitions and Guidance Framework. With effect from Friday, 8 December the Service Delivery Unit will be accessing a weekly electronic extract from your emergency care information system to obtain performance monitoring information.**

While it is acknowledged that there are some indicators in the document which cannot be monitored at present (for example data on cancellations of operations), systems are being developed and will be implemented to ensure this information will be available and monitored in the future. Trusts will be informed when these new monitoring arrangements become live.

For Trusts on non-NIRAES IT systems, I am grateful for your efforts in formatting Trust data to the required specification. Apart from some minor issues, which we hope to have resolved shortly, these data have loaded successfully into the DIS Datawarehouse and will be subject to our regular performance monitoring arrangements. Please ensure that your IT staff work closely with Eamon Doherty (028 90542353) in DIS to arrange for the ongoing electronic transfer of data to the Datawarehouse.

Should you require further information about, or clarification of, any aspect of the framework please contact Robert Sowney, Director of Unscheduled Care, at the Service Delivery Unit.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dean Sullivan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**DEAN SULLIVAN**  
Director of Service Delivery

cc Chief Executives HSS Boards  
HSS Trust Lead Directors Elective and Emergency Reform  
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