



# **HSCPA**

*Health and Social Care Professional Alliance*

Radiology Dept  
Connolly Hospital  
Dublin 15

Mr Simon Harris TD  
Minister for Health  
Dept of Health  
Miesian Plaza  
50-58 Lower Baggot Street  
Dublin  
D02 XW14  
**June 5<sup>th</sup> 2020**

**RE: CHIEF NURSING OFFICER (CNO) POST**

Dear Minister Harris,

The HSCPA is the professional bodies alliance which represents Health and Social Care (HSCP) Professional Bodies in Ireland. We wrote to you in February regarding aspects of the CNO post. It was proposed that part of the postholders responsibilities would encompass the development and regulation of Health and Social Care Professionals in Ireland. Eligibility criteria for application for this position stated that candidates would need to be registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Board which excluded Health and Social Care Professionals from applying.

The HSCPA at the time indicated very clearly to you that this was not acceptable on a number of levels, the least of which is that HSCPs would have to rely on an entirely different profession to understand and strategise for the role of HSCPs in the acute, community and other aligned sectors.

To reiterate our collective position again, this is unacceptable from the standpoint of HSCPs. We have written many times to seek a meeting and discuss a HSCP office within the Dept of Health. The reply received from Sec Gen Department of Health (DoH) in March stated DoH intended position of valuing HSCP input and to this effect, the HSCPA looked to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss the matter of a Chief HSCP Officer within the DoH. We understand the interruption caused by the COVID-19

pandemic but still feel a meeting via video conference would have been possible especially in recent weeks.

The absence of a dedicated stand alone senior HSCP role within the Department of Health will impact negatively on the effective delivery of health and social care services, especially now in the face of the COVID-19 roadmap for reopening society and business

As indicated in our previous letter A Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) cannot advise on matters of HSCPs no more than they can advise on medical matters. Ensuring Minister for Health accesses expert HSCP advice and support during this tremendous period of change in the Irish public health services, encompassing Slainte Care, is undeniably paramount to ensuring effective service provision and the health and wellbeing of the Irish population. This cannot be done through a CNO. It is vital that you as Minister recognise the role of health and social care professionals independent of nursing and the fundamental necessity of having a Chief HSCP Officer in the DoH.

The HSCP professional bodies alone hold the authority on clinical standards and professional expertise to advise on matters relating to the respective professions. We are governed by the HSCP Act 2005 and regulated by CORU.

Our group represents 40,000 HSCPs and our preference would have been to engage in constructive dialogue with the DoH to progress this issue. However, the decision of the DoH to proceed with the appointment of a CNO without meeting the HSCPA to discuss our concerns is both disappointing and regrettable. The lack of recognition by the DoH of the professional autonomy of HSCPs outside of a medical and nursing governance structure is disrespectful to all current HSCPs and undermines future generations of HSCPs.

The HSCPA plan to liaise closely with various trade union organisations that share the concerns outlined above. We will also be communicating our concerns to all political parties and through a wide variety of traditional and social media platforms as the integrity of the 40,000 HSCPs that we represent demands that we take this stance.

We ask you once again to please meet with representatives of the Health and Social Care Professionals Alliance as a matter of urgency to discuss our concerns and those of the 40,000 HSCPs we represent.

Yours sincerely,



Michele Monahan

**Chairperson, Health and Social Care Professionals Alliance (HSCPA)**

**Cc:** Mr Jim Breslin, Secretary General, Department of Health

**Cc:** Mr Paul Reid, CEO, Health Service Executive

**Cc:** Ms Anne Marie Hoey, National Director of Human Resources, Health Services Executive

Mark Smyth President, PSI



Mary Mc Grath Chairperson AOTI



Marijke Morris , Chair IASLT



David Durney Chair SCI



, Ruth Reidy, INDI



, Aine McGuirk, Chair IASW



Pauline Wilson SCPI



, Gay Peart-Murphy, President ISCP



, Dean Harper, President IIRRT



, Jaina Byrne Chair IAO



Lisa Molloy, CEO IACP



Tanya Byrne, President



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*Tabera Dunphy*

Pat Dunphy, President AOI

