

An Taoiseach,
Micheál Martin, TD
Government Buildings,
Merrion Street Upper,
Dublin 2, D02 R583

Minister Stephen Donnelly, TD
Department of Health,
50-58, Block 1, Miesian Plaza,
Baggot Street Lower,
Dublin 2, D02 XW14

23rd September 2021

Implementation of Sláintecare

Dear Taoiseach, dear Minister Donnelly,

The Health Reform Alliance (HRA) is a coalition of charities across the health and social care sector, committed to universal access to health and social care and the values of equality and equity in the provision and funding of services.

In light of the recent resignations of Laura Magahy and Prof. Tom Keane, the HRA and other concerned charities and NGOs are writing to urge you to reprioritise Sláintecare and fund its implementation.

Universal healthcare will serve as a public good to protect the health of the population, and ensure that people have timely access to health services based on need. We ask you to reaffirm your commitment, not just to the principles of Sláintecare, but to the full implementation of the Sláintecare plan to achieve universal healthcare.

To progress Sláintecare, we urge you to take the following steps:

- **Recruit a Sláintecare Lead Executive and Chair of the Sláintecare Programme Implementation Office.** A key pillar of the implementation of the Sláintecare Action Plan is to ensure that essential posts are occupied by qualified individuals. We ask that you set out an appropriate timeline for recruiting these positions. Furthermore, it is important that the role of Lead Executive is recruited at the level of Secretary General, as set out in the initial 2017 Sláintecare Report. The person in post should have political backing and be given the independence to implement the programme of reform.
- **Advance legislation to enshrine waiting time policies in law as per the Sláintecare Action Plan.** COVID-19 has brought significant challenges to the health service; we will continue to feel its impact for years to come. In particular, it is unconscionable that almost one million people are on waiting lists for some form of healthcare.
- **Appropriately fund Sláintecare.** Taking action on recruiting Sláintecare leadership and legislation is important, but the success of these actions depends on the financial and infrastructural resources provided to Sláintecare. As such, there is an acute need to resource the Sláintecare Transition Fund, which is a vital enabler of structural progress towards reforming the healthcare system. It is also important to implement the eHealth agenda. Furthermore, Sláintecare will require predictable and adequate multi-annual funding moving forward.

The case for Sláintecare is stronger than ever as we enter a new phase of the public health emergency due to COVID-19 and anticipate a new wave of serious and advanced non-COVID illness. For a short period in time, the initial response to COVID-19 delivered access to healthcare based on need and we must continue to advance and sustainably fund a universal healthcare system.

The health of the population in Ireland will determine our collective success. The time to invest in the population and our collective future is now. We can no longer accept business as usual while many people are in such need of access to healthcare services.

To enable the vision of Sláintecare and deliver universal healthcare, a proactive approach fueled by political will is essential. It is vital that the government champions and prioritises the delivery of Sláintecare.

Yours sincerely,

Health Reform Alliance signatories:



Dr Tim Collins
CEO, Irish Heart Foundation



Orla O'Connor
Director, National Women's Council of Ireland



Patrick Connolly
CEO, Age Action



Rachel Morrogh
Director of Advocacy & External Affairs,
Irish Cancer Society



Gráinne O'Leary
CEO, Arthritis Ireland



Dr Bridget Johnston
Research Assistant Professor, Trinity College
Dublin

Signatories from other organisations:



Peter Murphy
CEO, Epilepsy Ireland



Philip Watt
CEO, Cystic Fibrosis Ireland



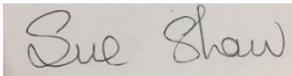
Carol Moore
CEO, Irish Kidney Association



Ava Battles
CEO, MS Ireland



Dr Sheila Gilheany
CEO, Alcohol Action Ireland



Sue Shaw
CEO, Irish Senior Citizens Parliament



Tanya Ward
Chief Executive, Children's Rights Alliance



Vivian Geiran
Chairman, Irish Association of Social Workers



Kieran O'Leary
CEO, Diabetes Ireland



Magdalen Rogers
Executive Director, Neurological Alliance of Ireland



Niall Mulligan
Executive Director, Samaritans Ireland



Sarah O'Connor
CEO, Asthma Society of Ireland



Derick Mitchell
CEO, IPPOSI



CC Minister Eamon Ryan TD, Leader of the Green Party
An Tánaiste Leo Varadkar TD, Leader of Fine Gael
Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health