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# The National Patient Experience Survey Conference 2019:

Knowing what matters to you and doing  
something about it

Welcome by Mr Phelim Quinn, HIQA CEO

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the first ever National Patient Experience Survey conference. My name is Phelim Quinn; I am the Chairman of the National Patient Experience Survey Steering Group and the CEO of HIQA.

It is impressive to see you all here today as we work together to bring about meaningful, sustainable improvements in patient care. The survey is only two years' old but already 26,000 patients have participated, making over 40,000 qualitative comments on the care they received in hospital. The success of this survey is down to all of you — the nurses, catering staff, patient advisory liaisons, quality and safety managers, and many others — and would not have been possible without your support and enthusiasm.

Without a doubt we will have to conduct surveys for a number of years to see whether changes are markedly noticeable and sustainable, but the results of the 2018 survey showed that there have been some positive improvements in hospital care, particularly in terms of discharge and transfer processes and care on the ward. The majority of patients, once they were admitted to a ward, spoke highly of hospital care.

The findings showed that the health service is listening and responding to patients. The HSE has established an Oversight Group for Improving Patient Experience in Acute Hospitals and is doing great work in promoting communication skills across hospitals through its National Healthcare Communication Programme.

Of course there is still room for improvement. Patients who participated in the 2018 survey asked to be provided with more information about their treatment, and wanted to be involved in decisions about their care and discharge. There is also

much to be done to improve the experiences of patients in our emergency departments.

These are areas which we will pay close attention to when the results of the 2019 survey are published later this year, as we work to deliver a more patient-centred approach to healthcare.

As you know, the first National Patient Experience Survey took place in 2017. At the time, Ireland was somewhat of an outlier internationally as we had no way of systematically gathering patient experience data at the national level. Patient experience surveys are a very useful way of finding specific problems in the delivery of healthcare, and provide hospital managers with detailed information on how to fix these problems.

This has contributed to a change in culture in Ireland and a move towards patient-centred care. We in HIQA were keen to lead on this new initiative, having long advocated for the need to place patients at the heart of healthcare. We recognize the importance of finding new ways to listen to the views and experiences of patients and service users.

HIQA has a broad and expanding remit which encompasses a number of diverse functions. Many of you will know that we are responsible for regulating health and social care services, but we also develop standards, conduct health technology assessments (HTA), and provide advice on Ireland's eHealth infrastructure. Last month HIQA's remit expanded as we became responsible for the regulation of medical exposure to ionising radiation in both public and private facilities.

Our primary aim is to advance high-quality and safe care for people accessing health and social care services. Putting the needs and the voices of patients and service users to the fore is the essence of everything we do.

HIQA's Corporate Plan 2019–2021 outlines our direction for the next three years as we continue with our mission to improve health and social care services for the people of Ireland. We are committed to improving the quality of health and social care services and to protect and safeguard all service users.

In HIQA we are always seeking new ways to listen to the views and experiences of patients and service users. We know that if we are to succeed with our mission, we must actively engage with the public and involve them in our work. To this end, work has already begun on the establishment of a new citizen forum within HIQA, which will be rolled out over the lifetime of our corporate plan.

In addition, I am delighted to announce that a new survey of Ireland's maternity services will commence in early 2020. This survey will capture the experiences of new mothers from prenatal and antenatal care through to postnatal care. Women who are aged 16 or older who give birth during the survey period will be invited to participate in the survey approximately three months after the birth of their baby.

This is an exciting venture and will, for the first time, give new mothers the opportunity to share their views of Ireland's maternity services. Their feedback will provide an invaluable insight into the experiences of women who give birth in Ireland and help us — HIQA, the HSE and the Department of Health — to improve the quality and safety of Irish maternity services.

In August of last year, HIQA commenced a programme of monitoring against the National Standards for Safer Better Maternity Services. All nineteen maternity units in public hospitals will have been inspected against the National Standards by the end of this year. The National Maternity Survey is another key building block in the development of a maternity service that is responsive to the needs of women and their families, ensuring that they are treated with dignity, respect and compassion at all times.

The National Patient Experience Survey and the National Maternity Survey come under the umbrella of the National Care Experience Programme — a new, overarching partnership by HIQA, the HSE and the Department of Health. This programme aims to empower people using Ireland's health and social care services to become more engaged in their care by voicing their opinions and sharing their experiences of services. The programme will not only measure people's experiences of acute hospital care and maternity services, but, over the next three years, will also expand to two further areas.

The National Care Experience Programme embodies the key objectives set out in HIQA's Corporate Plan 2019–2021, which are to put patients and service users at the heart of what we do, to engage constructively and positively with our partners within the health and social care system and to make services safer and better for all of our citizens. We have set out our ambitious plans for the National Care Experience Programme in a three-year strategy, which we will be launching in the coming months.

But back to the here and now! This year's National Patient Experience Survey will take place again in May. All patients aged sixteen years and older who are discharged that month having spent at least 24 hours in hospital will be invited to take part in the survey.

I am very much looking forward to visiting some of our hospitals as part of our information meetings for hospital staff in May, which will cover all 40 participating hospitals, from Bantry to Beaumont. Last year I witnessed first-hand your hard work and the commitment you show to improving the standard of care for your patients. Your enthusiasm for the National Patient Experience Survey was inspiring, and it is in no small part down to you that the survey has been such a resounding success. In 2017 and 2018, together we achieved response rates of over 50%, and I am confident that with your help, this year we can match, if not beat, this figure!

The focus of today's conference is on the patient, and how we can learn from them, and one another, to bring about relevant, real change for all our patients.

We will hear from Peter Clarke, who will tell us about his journey following his diagnosis with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, and Brian and Valerie Cox will tell us how Brian recovered from a life-changing illness. Our keynote speaker, Dr Johnny Walker, will advise us how we can use the findings of the survey to make real changes for patients, while Dr Conor Foley will talk us through some of the key findings from last year's National Patient Experience Survey.

We will also hear from individual hospitals — Ennis, the Mater, Kilcreene — and from Saolta Hospital Group, who will tell us how they took the results of the 2017 National Patient Experience Survey to bring about meaningful improvements in patient

experience. These positive measures bore fruit, and were subsequently acknowledged by patients in the 2018 survey.

The Executive Director of Slaintecare, Laura Magahy, will open this afternoon's session and outline the Government's ten-year programme to transform our health and social care services and how the voice of the patient is at the heart of healthcare reform.

Following Laura's presentation, I invite you to take part in a panel discussion exploring the future of the National Patient Experience Survey and how we are using the survey data not only to improve patient experience on the ground, but also to develop Government policy and inform HIQA's programme of regulation.

To finish, I am pleased to welcome Minister for Health Simon Harris, who will close the conference and provide us with an insight into the work of the National Patient Safety Office and how the Government is working to improve the quality of Irish healthcare.

I wish to thank you all for being here today. Your attendance at today's conference is a demonstration of **your** commitment to your patients, and your desire to improve their experiences of hospital care.

I look forward to the conversations we will have this morning as we explore how we can best use the findings of the National Patient Experience Survey for the benefit of all patients.

If you have any questions, please chat to me over coffee, approach the team at the patient experience stand outside the hall, or ask a question during the panel

discussion. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible over the course of the day.

I hope you enjoy the day and leave this afternoon full of ideas!

Thank you.



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