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National

New Frontiers: Ensuring Success for the Irish Health Service

The Health Management Institute of Ireland (HMI) held their annual conference in the Gresham hotel in Dublin. Over 200 delegates attended the informative event with the theme of "New Frontiers: Ensuring Success for the Irish Health Service".

Derek Greene, President of HMI, opened the conference welcoming delegates and thanking the speakers for taking time out of their busy schedules to share their experiences. Greene stressed the need for strong leadership in Irish healthcare.

Secretary General of the Department of Health Ambrose McLaughlin gave the opening address, emphasising that the end goal for healthcare in Ireland is access based on need and not income. Extolling the virtues of the Healthy Ireland initiative, McLaughlin believes it is a brand to help grow jobs and health and well-being in Ireland. Health managers play a key role in this transformation. He also spoke of the plans for the university system to unite with the health system as a partner, creating innovation in terms of medtech, ICT and pharma.

The conference was split into three main themes: 'healthcare leadership', 'breaking the mould' and 'working together for success'.



Photo. (from left to right) Gerry O'Dwyer, Gerard O'Callaghan, Richard Dooley, Lucy Nugent, Edmond Fitzgerald and Derek Greene

Healthcare Leadership

Tony O'Brien, Director General of the Health Service Executive opened the session on health service leadership. Shirley Cramer, CEO of the Institute for Health Management and the Royal Society for Public Health spoke about leadership and culture. She emphasised the importance of looking after the health workforce and managing across the system. Bill Maher introduced his vision, values and performance of the recently formed West/North West Hospital Group. He highlighted the challenges and opportunities of these hospital groups from his own experience, citing holding board meetings in public and managing by walking around as two great ways of learning more about your hospital/group/community.

Breaking the Mould

The breaking the mould session took a look at things from a different perspective. Prof. Mark Ferguson, Director General of the Science Foundation of Ireland focussed on the power of innovation and the potential Ireland has in this area. Catherine Whelan, from the Independent Hospitals Association of Ireland looked at alternative hospital models. Explaining the current situation in the private sector, Whelan emphasised that both private and public hospitals are experiencing many of the same challenges.

Working Together for Success

The final session of the conference was a panel discussion entitled 'Working together for success' featuring a number of National Directors within the Health Service Executive (HSE). The Directors of Clinical Strategy and Programmes, Primary Care, Acute Hospitals and Social care each discussed the key priorities for the delivery of services within their directorate. A common theme was the importance of working together to develop synergies to provide more efficient services.

Rising to the Challenge

Closing the conference, Derek Greene urged delegates to get involved and to rise to the “challenge placed on our shoulders”. He stressed that the work of healthcare managers can, and will, make a difference. Greene added that the work of the HMI goes beyond the annual conference and encouraged delegates to get involved in regional meetings and find out more about the new leadership awards and research activities.

For more information, please visit: www.hmi.ie

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