

Would you like help to quit smoking?

Need information on how to help someone else who wants to **QUIT**?

If so we can help...

For further information contact the Health Promotion Department at: smokingprevention@nehb.ie or Tel: 041 68 50 671

You can also phone the National Smokers Quitline on **1850 201 203** for personal advice seven days a week between 8am and 10pm.

The Neurofibromatosis Association of Ireland provide support to Neurofibromatosis patients and their families. The association aims to create an awareness of the condition and to educate health professionals about this little known genetic condition. The association has developed an information pack, a 'Clinical guidance for the management of Neurofibromatosis' and a CD Rom, 'Understanding Neurofibromatosis - a medical resource about Neurofibromatosis for parents, patients and providers'.

If you are interested in receiving any of the above information contact: Paddy Griffin, General Secretary, Neurofibromatosis Association of Ireland, Carmichael Centre, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7. Tel 01 872 6338.



Deirdre Dullaghan, Louth County Hospital, Geraldine McCabe, Regional Partnership, Mai Kearns McAdam, Partnership Facilitator and Paul Robinson, CEO NEHB pictured at the North Eastern Regional Women's Network Winter Conference 2003.

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Recent Appointment.

Congratulations to Kathleen Cusack on her appointment as Director of Public Health Nursing in Community Services Co Meath.

Kathleen trained as a midwife in St James's Hospital in the 1970s. In 1991 she received a Higher Diploma in Public Health Nursing at UCD and later worked as a public health nurse in Dublin. She transferred to Meath Community Services in 1997 and later began her career in nurse management. She has an honours degree in health administration and a Masters in health care management.



Pictured above are Course Facilitators who attended the recent ACLS Course in Our Lady's Hospital, Navan, with the Director of Nursing Louth/Meath Hospital Group Aileen Maguire (front row middle). Also in the photograph are Course Director, Dr. Ger O'Leary, Consultant Anaesthetist and Course Co-ordinator Regina Tevlin RTO.



Health Matters

North Eastern Health Board
Staff Magazine



Bord Sláinte an Oir Thuaiscirt
Nuachtiris Foirne

Issue No.12 February 2004

Irish Social Services Inspectorate Report on Castleblayney Unit welcomed.

The North Eastern Health Board has received the Irish Social Services Inspectorate (ISSI) Report following their first inspection of the high support unit, Rath na nÓg in Castleblayney, Co Monaghan.

The Board welcomes the report which recognizes that “the young people were being very well cared for” and that “the staff of the unit have good reason to be satisfied with what has been achieved to date.”

The report identifies a number of areas of shortcoming, most of which were already being addressed prior to the inspection. The NEHB welcomes this process of inspection and the identification of issues for attention in view of the important nature of the work carried out within the Rath na nÓg unit and the potential of the service to have a significant impact on the lives of young people admitted to its care.

Responding to the report the Assistant CEO with responsibility for Community Services Aidan Browne said; “As a newly established unit which was planned, built, opened and put into operation within a very short timeframe, it is a credit to the local management and staff that such a high standard has been achieved. I am very conscious however of the significant challenge which is always present in continuing to provide good and safe care to this group of young people. As a developing service I am confident that we will continue to learn and to improve, and I’m hopeful that, in partnership with our colleagues in the North Western, Western and Midland Health Boards, we will achieve and maintain a standard of excellence.”

The Irish Social Services Inspectorate (ISSI) carried out an announced inspection of Rath na nÓg in October 2003.

The unit which is operated by the North Eastern Health Board, provides a specialist residential service to young people from the catchment areas of the North Eastern, Midland, North Western and Western Health Boards. The unit had been open just over a year and there were six young people in residence at the time of inspection.

The Social Services Inspectorate was established in 1999 by the Minister for Children at the Department of Health and Children. It is planned that the Inspectorate will be established on a statutory basis. However for the initial period the Inspectorate operates as a professional body, independent but administered by the Department of Health and Children.

Judgements about the quality of services are essential to the work of the Social Services Inspectorate. The reports of the Social Services Inspectorate make clear statements on what is good about a service that has been inspected and what needs to be improved.

In carrying out inspections, the Inspectorate works with health boards, the Department of Health and Children and other relevant organisations to ensure that child care and social care services are responsive to the needs of the population and allow the public to have confidence in them.

The full report is available on the ISSI website at www.issi.ie. Any staff interested in hearing more about this service or arranging a visit to the unit should contact Michael Carville, Regional Manager at 042 9751905.

IN THIS ISSUE

Foster Care Conference	3
Gold Standard Physio Course	4
NEHB Service Plan	5-8
Extension of Autism Services	9
Incident Reporting Policy	10
NERWN Strategic Plan	11



Staff Nurse Catherine Darby was on hand to capture the moment as President Mary Mc Aleese met Seamus Crean during her recent visit to Dunshaughlin Health Care Unit

President McAleese visits Dunshaughlin Health Care Unit



May Keenan, Dunshaughlin looks on as local EMTs, Charlie Collins and Des Mulreanny meet President Mary McAleese during her visit to Dunshaughlin Local Health Care Unit.

President Mary McAleese met with clients, staff and invited guests during an hour long visit to Dunshaughlin Health Care Unit on Wednesday, January 14th.

The President was welcomed to the Dunshaughlin Unit by the Vice-Chairman of the North Eastern Health Board Mr James Mangan. President McAleese was invited to visit the unit after a group from the Tara Suite Mental Health Day Centre, which is based in the Dunshaughlin Health Care Unit, visited Áras an Uachtaráin in February 2002.

Dunshaughlin Health Care Unit opened in July 1998. The unit was designed to cater for the health and social needs of the people living in the South Meath catchment area.

The services provided in the Health Care Unit include a full range of mental health services, a day hospital for older persons, a full range of GP services, dental, orthodontic and oral hygiene services, speech & language therapy, occupational therapy services for children, support services for children at risk and families in difficulty, child and adolescent psychiatric services, public health nursing, area medical officers and environmental health services.

Information Line Staff Help 3,500 Callers

Over 3,500 calls have been made to the North Eastern Health Board Information Line since the service was launched in December, 2002.

The North Eastern Health Board set up the Information Line to ensure members of the public have 24-hour seven day access to information about health and social services in the region. People in the north-east contact the Call Save 1850 24 1850 number for information and advice regarding eligibility and entitlements to services, application forms for health services and information on health promotion initiatives.

The Information Line is supported by a comprehensive computerised database system with data on over 150 topics and services provided by the Board. It is monitored on a regular basis to ensure that the information provided is as comprehensive and up to date as possible.

Of the 3,500 calls received to date the most frequently asked questions focus on medical cards, the drugs payment scheme, the home help service, health promotion information and information about how to get in touch with support groups, e.g. cancer support groups, crisis pregnancy, eating disorders etc.

Primary Care Services Development Officer Geraldine Kane said; "We are delighted with the success of the Information Line to date. The service has proven to be a valuable resource to the North Eastern Health Board and especially to the people of the north east. We hope to further utilise its potential in the coming years by working with other service providers, both statutory and voluntary, to continue to provide comprehensive information about health services in the north-east on a 24-hour seven day a week basis."

The Information Line was set up following the publication of the Primary Care Strategy in 2001 which identified the need to establish a direct telephone or email links to Primary Care Services in each health board area.

Trainers Begin Child Health Surveillance Course

The training of regional trainers in Child Health Surveillance began last month in the Trinity Centre for Health Sciences, Tallaght Hospital, Dublin.

This multidisciplinary programme, to be delivered over a 21-day period, will focus on training trainers from each health board region to co-ordinate and deliver at local level, the national standardised, quality-assured 'training programme for doctors and public health nurses involved in child health surveillance'.

The recently appointed NEHB Regional Training and Development Officer, Child and Adolescent Health, Ms. Eileen Maguire and Dr Robert Murphy, representing the NEHB Regional Area Medical Officers, are among the 20 multidisciplinary health care workers attending the training programme which takes place between January and April. The programme follows on from recommendations in two reports, 'Best Health for Children - Developing a Partnership with Families' (1999) and the supplementary report entitled 'Training of Doctors and Public Health Nurses' (2000). The national curriculum to support the delivery of this programme will be developed in consultation with all key stakeholders including

public health nurses, area medical officers, regional child & adolescent health committees, regional child & adolescent health development officers and outside agencies including the academic institutions. It will be based on the national training needs analysis (2000) and the process will be overseen by a national expert group established by the Board of HeBE.



Pictured 1-r: Eileen Maguire, Regional Training & Development Officer - Child & Adolescent Health and Dr Robert Murphy, Area Medical Officer, Cavan.

Over 100 Delegates Attend Foster Care Conference

More than 100 health care professionals from the region attended a conference on foster care in Carrickmacross last December organised by the Irish Foster Care Association in partnership with the North Eastern Health Board.

Foster carers, social workers, young people, child care staff, aftercare services, other health professionals and representatives from the private and voluntary services in the north east organised the conference which was entitled 'Learning Together In Foster Care'. The regional representative of the Irish Foster Care Association, Alice Parkinson chaired the conference.

Opening the conference the Director of Governance, Planning and Evaluation of Children and Family Services in the North Eastern Health Board, Nuala Doherty, highlighted the value of working in partnership on the task of caring for young people in foster care. The national co-ordinator for the Irish Foster Care Association, Pat Whelan, gave a keynote speech on the role of the Association, while Meg Lindsay, Consultant in Residential Child Care and Community Care, Scotland, presented the findings from the Review of Foster Care Services in the North Eastern Health Board.

Andrew Fagan and Ann Ryan of the Social Service Inspectorate spoke about the newly developed National Standards in Foster Care and the role of the Inspectorate.

Four workshops took place on the themes 'A Review of Foster Care', 'National Standards on Foster Care', 'After Care,' and 'Stop, Look and Listen, a consultation process with young people in care.'

Copies of the Foster Care Review and the National Standards in Foster Care are available from the Regional Child Care Office, Tel: 01-8250907.



Pictured l-r: Nuala Doherty, Director of Governance, Planning and Evaluation - Children and Family Services; Andrew Fagan, Social Service Inspectorate; Meg Lindsay, Consultant in Residential Child Care and Community Care, Scotland; Alice Parkinson, Regional Representative, Irish Foster Care Association; Pat Whelan, National Coordinator, Irish Foster Care Association and Ann Ryan, Social Service Inspectorate

NEHB LIBRARY GOES VIRTUAL!

When the medical library in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital opened its doors in 1993 it was one of the few such resources in existence in any Irish hospital at that time, writes Jean Harrison.

Since then six other libraries have come into being, generated by the educational and information needs of staff within the Board. In 1993 we thought we were super advanced to have at our disposal one PC and a printer with the Cinahl information database available on CD-Rom and then only in the libraries. Today CD-Rom technology is almost passé as the Internet enables vast quantities of information to be conveyed to people at work and in their homes. So it is with library information. Most of the libraries in the Board are located in the Acute Sector but library staff are acutely (pardon the pun) aware that staff in Community Care, Child Care, Residential Care, Primary Care, Public Health and in all sections of the Board require access to evidence based information for their work or for educational purposes. Staff also need that information 24/7 and 365 days of the year. With this in mind the library has gone virtual! Two major changes have taken place in the last couple of years; we have made available via the Internet, many of the library resources to staff. People want to be able to source as much as possible from their computers. To have had the cd-rom do the searching for you and produce a list of citations was innovative in its day because that had replaced the back breaking work of trawling through printed indexes for information. Now not only do we want the computer to do the searching for us but we also require the full-text of the journal

articles or the books available on our PC.

MDCONSULT:

For doctors the answer is MDConsult which brings the leading medical resources together into one integrated service online to help find answers to clinical questions and make better decisions about treatment. It covers over 60 medical journals and clinics full text, integrating Medline and the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews.

Books online:

Over 39 leading medical reference books.

Patient Handouts:

There are 3,500 patient education handouts which can be customised.

Drug Information:

Prescribing information for over 30,000 medications.

Clinical topic tours, case of the week, Practice Guidelines and up-date on this week's most important medical journals.

All of this is available by completing a registration form now available on the Board's Intranet or by contacting your local NEHB library (again locations and details available on the Intranet.)

Psycinfo:

Comprehensive bibliographic coverage of psychology and behavioural sciences literature, now with a huge range of psychology and psychiatric journals full text, some available as far back as 1988.

Cinahl; Nursing & Allied Health Database with full text journals which we hope to add to this year.

Hmic: The Health Management Database of the King's Fund in London.

NEHB INTRANET:

The library has a site on the Board's Intranet. It is available on networked personal computers at <http://intranet/>

Here you can access the full list of library locations, opening hours and contacts, registration forms for MD Consult and the other databases and to borrow books from the libraries, suggestions for new books form along with a copy of our video catalogue.

Ongoing developments on the INTRANET site.

We hope shortly to have available our online catalogue of books (now in excess of 10,000 items) which will allow you to search for any item you require and reserve books. We also intend to make available access to our databases from the Intranet and recommended sites for information of use to staff.

Training courses:

Through the Regional Education Centre the library service provides training courses in databases and the Internet aimed at specific groups of staff. Application forms and details are available on the Intranet and in the Education Prospectus.

So if you haven't registered with us yet (and over 3,000 of you have to-date) please visit us either in person or at our Intranet site, we really do look forward to meeting you.

Jean Harrison is the NEHB Regional Librarian and can be contacted at her email address Jean.Harrison@nehb.ie

New Dental Service Software System On The Way

The North Eastern Health Board Dental Service plans to implement a new software system during 2004 which will enable the streamlining of the existing manual processes in relation to data capture and processing of information and also appointment booking.

It will also enable the electronic charting of patient information as well as providing the capability for enhanced information sharing, integration and reporting. The system will be a key enabler of improved patient care and service delivery going forward.

The project has the key support of the Principal Dental Surgeons for Meath (Dr Mary O'Farrell), Louth (Dr John Kelly) and Cavan/Monaghan (Dr Fergal Connolly).

Pilot sites have been chosen in each of the three regional areas

Cavan/Monaghan, Meath and Louth for the initial implementation.

Computer Equipment, Software and Networking are currently being implemented to enable the rollout to the initial sites. It will also allow for the deployment of the solution in the mobile units in each of the regional locations.

The system selected has already been implemented successfully in the East Coast Area Health Board and the North Western Health Board. The Midland Health Board, Western Health Board, Northern Area and South Western Area Health Boards of the ERHA also have plans to implement the system.

A Project Board chaired by Mr Geoff Day Asst CEO Regional Services is overseeing the project.

The other members of the Board include Dr Fergal Connolly, Principal

Dental Surgeon in Cavan/Monaghan and Project Business Implementation Manager, Dr Carmel Parnell, Regional IT Manager, Michael Redmond and Project Manager, Willie Anderson.

The software system is due to undergo validation and user acceptance testing in the near future and a dental user group has been appointed to enable that process.

The dental user group will have a key involvement in training as the system is rolled out to the various locations. The user group members include Meath based Belinda Monaghan, Louth based Una Clarke and Cavan/Monaghan representatives, Kathleen Smyth, Antoinette Doogan and Mary Thornton Connolly.

Gold Standard Physio Course Held in NEHB for First Time

Patients benefited recently when the internationally recognised NDT Bobath Certification course in the Treatment of Stroke Victims was held in the north-east for the first time, writes **Ann Bourke**.

Meath Community Physiotherapy Department organised the three week course which is the gold standard in the treatment of individuals who have suffered damage to the brain following a stroke or head injury. Eight physiotherapists and occupational therapists from the North Eastern Health Board attended the course. Twelve other health professionals from around the country also attended the intensive course which included lectures and patient demonstrations.

Thirteen patients from the north-east availed of a free consultation with the two international experts and/or two weeks of daily treatments with a follow up programme. Most volunteers have already signed up again should the course return to Meath! The end of course survey revealed that the course participants had gained a lot of new knowledge about treating people with these very challenging conditions.

Meath Community Physiotherapy Department would like to thank Meath Community Care General Manager, Jane Carolan and her management team, and Kevin James in the Regional Education Centre, Ardee for their encouragement and support in organising the course.

Ann Bourke is Physiotherapy Manager in Meath Community Services.

Fire Service Members Raise €4000 for Early Intervention Service Team



Pictured l-r: Terese Crosbie, Ann Hynes, Martin Yore (Fire Service), Kathleen Lambe and Maria Heatley, Early Intervention Service Team receive a cheque for €4,000 from members of Dundalk Fire Service, the proceeds of the recent 'Bucket Collection' for the Dundalk Fire Service Benevolent Fund. Back l-r: Noel Agnew, Martin McGee, Paddy Lawless, Darren Murphy and Fr. Johnny Burns.

New ISO Standard for Dental Services

The North Eastern Health Board's Dental Services have successfully made the transition from its previously accredited ISO 9002 Quality System to the new ISO 9001: 2000 standard following an external audit last November carried by SGS Yarsley, writes **Fergal Connolly**.

An ISO User Group comprising members of the Dental Service across the region have overseen the project to date and this group will assist implementation and review of the Quality System. The SOP and Quality Manuals are formatted on disc and the initial introduction of a networked dental information system across the region will facilitate the total formatting of the system digitally, thus eventually superceding the existing manual system of amending and updating procedures.

Fergal Connolly is Principal Dental Surgeon Quality Co-ordinator

NEHB Service Plan 2004

NEHB Service Plan 2004

The Board adopted a Service Plan for 2004 at a special meeting convened for this purpose on 19th January 2004. The Service Plan is available on the intranet. The document this year runs to over 100 pages and the following paragraphs offer a flavour of the CEO's foreword to the plan and the key developments in Regional Services, Community Services and Acute Hospital Services to be implemented in 2004.

CEO's Overview

The Government announced its proposals for a major reorganisation of the Irish health system on June 17th 2003. These proposals include significant changes in the structures for delivery of health care. The new Health Service Executive will assume responsibility for the delivery of health services on January 1st 2005 and the Health Boards will be abolished from that date. Accordingly, this is the last Service Plan for the North Eastern Health Board. 'A Health Strategy for the People of the North East' provides us with a framework to meet the challenges and opportunities of 'Quality and Fairness' with particular focus on the people of this region. The Board will continue to advance the strategy objectives of delivering services which are centred on the patient/client/community, deliver greater equity in service provision and secure efficiency gains in the use of resources.

Allocation 2004

The level of non capital expenditure (i.e. gross expenditure less minor income) determined for the North Eastern Health Board for 2004 is €548.859m. This represents an increase of 4.4% on the final allocation for 2003 and 14.5% on the initial allocation. A full breakdown of this allocation is contained in the financial details section of the Service Plan.

While the increase is substantial, a considerable portion will be required to meet pay awards. Some funding has been made available for developments and specific cost pressures but no additional funding has been provided for the major pressures - demographic change (including children, older people and asylum seekers) and Acute Hospital Services - identified in Reports to the Board and submitted to the Minister during 2003. Consequently, the need to strictly control levels of service, staffing and expenditure will be even greater in 2004.

The failure to secure additional funding for these key areas also makes it extremely difficult to deal with the imbalance in resource allocation between the Community Care areas within the Board. Within the limits of the allocation, this issue will be addressed in the allocation of development funding and in proposals in relation to health inequalities.

The Letter of Determination indicates the financial limits and control, employment levels, procedures, performance indicators and

reporting arrangements for the coming year. There is also a very significant emphasis on accountability. The key elements in the letter are as follows:

- Supplementary estimates cannot be anticipated for the health services in 2004. This means that the Board will be expected to manage items such as minor pay awards, pay related issues and demand-led services from within the notified determination. Arising from this, an appropriate contingency sum must be provided within the Service Plan in respect of unexpected issues or pressures;
- Provision for a non-pay inflation rate of 2.8%. In addition, a Value For Money (VFM) target will apply to the total allocation for both pay and non-pay. The targeted amount for this saving is €2.3m and this has already been deducted from the allocation. Consequently it will be necessary to achieve VFM savings of at least this amount to maintain services at approved levels;
- An employment ceiling of 6,920 staff was approved by the Department of Health and Children in respect of 2003; this figure was reduced by 14 during 2003 and will be reduced by a further 14 in 2004 bringing our employment ceiling for 2004 to 6,892 staff. This ceiling must be strictly adhered to and will be monitored on a monthly basis. The allocation takes account of the revised staffing ceiling by a reduction equivalent to the payroll costs of 14 staff for a full year.

In an effort to focus specifically on the wider determinants of health and social gain for the population a service development fund of €1.5 million for 2004 is being provided from within the allocation. It will specifically focus on projects which will reduce health inequalities. The fund will have two streams - one focusing on services for older people and the other on services for children and families. The specific projects are currently being developed and will be notified at a later date.

It will be necessary due to the funding made available to contain activity, staffing levels and expenditure to the targets outlined in the plan. This will be extremely difficult and we are facing a challenging year for the Board, for management and for staff. In addition to managing the business of the Board, progressing the Reform Programme and the transition to the new system of health care will have a considerable impact. The principles which have governed the proposals in the Service Plan are the provision of safe and quality services to patients and clients, ensuring that core services continue to be provided and the alignment of the Service Plan with the National Strategy 'Quality and Fairness', and 'A Health Strategy for the People of the North East'.

Regional Services

Ambulance Service

- Following training of all Emergency Medical Controllers and a short trial period, a Computer

Aided Dispatch system will be commissioned in 2004. Additional training will also be delivered to all Emergency Medical Technicians;

- A major incident exercise is planned for 2004. It is envisaged that all internal and external agencies involved in major emergency planning will participate;
- The efficiency and effectiveness of the new patient transport service, introduced on a trial basis in 2003, will be monitored and evaluated in 2004;
- In conjunction with the Regional Materials Management Service and the Health Boards Executive, the service will participate in preparing a specification document in relation to new vehicle purchase and vehicle maintenance.

HEALTH PROMOTION

- Smoking cessation clinics, addressing the specific needs of more than 2,000 smokers will continue in the five acute hospitals across the region in partnership with acute hospital services;
- In conjunction with the implementation of the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2002, a range of supportive initiatives will be offered to approximately 1,000 work-place settings including awareness campaigns, policy development and training;
- The Health Promotion Department will contribute to the education and training of 250 healthcare professionals in the principles of health promotion so as to enhance capacity for provision of a more holistic service;
- The report of the Parasuicide Registry will be examined and evidence-based measures will be taken to reduce the number of people, particularly young people, reporting deliberate self-harm;
- The Youth Health Service will provide sexual health training to trainee GPs, teachers, youth workers, and residential childcare workers;
- The peer education programme for Travellers delivered in Co. Louth in 2003 will be expanded to Co. Meath.

MEN'S HEALTH

- Work on the Men's Health Action Plan, which began in 2003, will be completed in 2004 and will inform service developments in relation to Men's Health;
- In collaboration with the Health Promotion Department and Primary Care Services, educational programmes relating to men's health will be developed for pharmacists, practice nurses, student nurses and trainee GPs;
- In collaboration with various service programmes across the region, support will be provided in addressing the needs of diverse groups such as male Travellers, gay and bi-sexual men, asylum seekers/refugees, men with a disability and male victims of domestic violence;
- The provision of relevant general and local information on men's health will be enhanced through the establishment of a Men's Health

NEHB Service Plan 2004

website and improved links with the Lo-call Information Line;

- A Men's Health Promotion booklet, developed initially within the NEHB, will be finalised in 2004 and published nationally with financial support from the National Editorial Group in the Health Promotion Unit, Department of Health and Children;
- Discussions in relation to the possibility of establishing 'wellman' clinics within primary care will be progressed in 2004.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

- A Regional Strategy for Women's Health will be developed;
- A health promotion peer education training programme will be facilitated in Co. Meath;
- The health promotion potential of women's groups will be further progressed;
- The dissemination of information on women's health will remain a priority and will be advanced through the continued development of the Women's Health website and the NEHB Lo-call Information line;
- Postnatal support services will be enhanced through the development of a multi-disciplinary pathway of care, provision of training courses on prevention, identification and management of Postnatal Depression for relevant staff and hosting of a postnatal support group;
- Both public and professional awareness regarding the prevention and effective management of incontinence will be increased;
- Liaise with various departments in relation to supporting service development in relation to addressing the needs of diverse groups.

CARDIOVASCULAR STRATEGY

- The Smoking Cessation education programmes in conjunction with nutrition and physical activity teams will target the at risk population, for example pregnant women, and will provide information and education on life style modification thereby encouraging active living and a healthy diet;
- All staff will be encouraged to incorporate health promotion measures into their work through the provision of brief interventions training programmes;
- The Diabetes Pilot Initiative will be further developed and evaluated;
- The findings of the Primary Care Cardiovascular Initiative Questionnaire will be used to inform future developments.

CANCER SERVICES

- The new premises for the provision of a dedicated symptomatic breast cancer and palliative care service at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda will be fully commissioned during 2004;
- Specialist staff will be employed to further develop the symptomatic breast cancer service;
- Transfer and upgrading of the mammography unit in Cavan General Hospital to Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

- A Multi-disciplinary Steering Committee for Discharge Planning will develop an effective policy that will facilitate the integrated and appropriate discharge planning of older people;
- Actions outlined in 'Working Towards Quality in Residential Services within the NEHB' will be implemented by the directors of nursing, practice development co-ordinator and the area co-ordinators services for older people;
- Protocols for the management of elder abuse will be developed. Awareness and training packages will be developed and a pilot project will be actioned;
- The regional director in conjunction with the Regional Inspections Committee will review the inspections process and develop associated standards. A Complaints Procedure will be developed and training needs will be identified;
- The Regional Office in conjunction with the Continence Promotion Steering Group and Womens Health Committee will continue to prioritise the development of a dedicated Continence Advisor who will initiate an integrated Continence Advisory Service to nursing homes, residential units, acute hospitals and community services;
- The Home Support Steering Committee will develop a system of personalised home support packages and a pilot project will be actioned in each community care area.
- Additional funding for Nursing Home Subvention will provide for increased need for this service across the region.
- Funding for Personal Care Packages will provide for a Pilot Scheme in Co. Meath.
- Home Help Service funding will provide for additional home help hours to meet increased need across the region.
- Funding for the Elder Abuse Programme will support a Pilot Training Programme.

CHILD CARE AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

- Existing services to children and families will be consolidated and the delivery of services on a multi-disciplinary basis will be advanced placing the child at the centre of the decision making process;
- A number of core practices and procedures which require regional uniformity will be identified and a systematic programme of standardisation will be initiated.
- The launch of the strategy for children and families and the process of alignment of the service will begin to enable strategy implementation;
- Establish and develop a teen pregnancy support project in Co. Louth, funded by the crisis pregnancy agency, with integrated cross programme and statutory/voluntary partnership;
- Publish and launch the report 'Changing direction - Evaluation of services for women experiencing violence in the North East region';

- A joint, integrated approach, including the development of structures and protocols for working with children with disabilities who have child protection, child welfare and care needs will be developed with services for people with Disabilities;
- Pilot standardised assessment framework for assessing need in vulnerable children with multi-disciplinary professional teams;
- Audit the foster care services, using the National Standards for Foster Care and the 1995 Regulations as a guide and commence the monitoring process;
- Implement the newly updated Policies and Procedures document in the residential care service and the high support service;
- The Board's Supervision policy for child care staff and aligned discipline - specific protocols will be printed and distributed to all child care staff and its implementation monitored;
- Launch the Neglect 11 research 'Child Neglect : Professionals' perspectives in the North Eastern Health Board Region, 2003' and hold a Conference to disseminate the findings;
- As part of the development of high performing leadership the following initiatives will be taken;
 - Training courses in child care supervision and a multi-disciplinary management development programme will be delivered;
 - Multi-disciplinary management support forums will be formalised and supported;
 - A leadership skills development group will be established.

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY

- Commence a one-day a week Day Programme for adolescents with serious psychiatric disorders;
- A Case Management Forum will be set up for all Family Support Cases (including those with psychological and psychiatric disorders who require family support) to formalise recording of assessment, identification of needs, how these needs are met and any unmet need;
- All child psychiatry posts will be filled subject to employment ceiling;
- An Integrated Parent and Child Clinic will be developed for the treatment and prevention of attachment disorders in children. This will link in with other NEHB initiatives e.g. identification of post natal depression by PHNs and the Crosslinks project and with the adoption service.

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH

- Work on projects already in progress will be further advanced including the implementation of the Child Health and Adolescent Health Demonstration Projects. The recommendations of the Birthing and Babies Study will also begin to be implemented.
- A framework for the assessment of health inequalities project proposals will be agreed, successful projects implemented and their

NEHB Service Plan 2004

progress monitored.

- The training programme on child health surveillance for Public Health Nurses and Area Medical Officers will be rolled out. Reviews will be conducted and recommendations developed for the areas of service related to child health, adolescent health, parent support and service user involvement.
- Cross-programme initiatives and links between the acute hospitals, community and primary care services will be further developed. The audit tool for child health clinics will be piloted and mainstreamed across the region. A proposal for the introduction of the Parent Health Record will also be developed, to include an integrated ICT system for child and adolescent health services.
- The outcomes of the review of the area medical officer service and the impact the changes will have on community child health services will be considered.
- The Regional Steering Committee will liaise more closely with other regional committees with a brief related to child and adolescent health and with the programme in Louth Community Care Area which addresses the issue of teenage pregnancy.

DISABILITY SERVICES

- Complete a Statement of Strategy for Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Services 2004 - 2007, and Intellectual Disability and Autism 2004 - 2007;
- Launch and commence the implementation of the Review of Autism Spectrum Disorder 'A Spectrum of Response for A Spectrum of Need' (NEHB, 2003);
- Conclude the review of outstanding issues relating to deficit funding claims of the major voluntary sector providers in the physical and sensory disability sector, and thereafter the signing off of appropriate service agreements;
- Service deficits, key pressure areas and priorities for development identified through Service Review Groups and Regional Consultative and Development Committees will be addressed within available resources;
- A range of measures and actions will be taken to implement the outcome and finding of the various Service Evaluation Reports conducted in 2003;
- Implement the actions and recommendations arising from the report of Regional Working Group on Personal Assistant Services;
- Benchmark the current level of organisational readiness of Board Services, including its resource requirements to prepare for the introduction of National Standards in Disability Services and extension of remit of ISSI;
- Carry out a comprehensive regional audit of the quality and integrity of the data on the Intellectual Disability Database;
- Develop a framework including an Assurance Checklist for effective user participation in service planning process and structures;
- In conjunction with Primary Health Care Services produce a 'Good Practice Guide' on access to Primary Health Care for People with

Disability (including the update of current guidance to General Practitioners 'Include me in').

SPECIALIST PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICES

The objectives that will guide the overall provision of Palliative Care Services during 2004 include:

- The implementation within existing resources of the recommendations from the Needs Assessment Study;
- Improving arrangements with the units for the elderly in respect of services for the dying;
- Commencement of second phase, Needs Assessment Study, examining the needs of patients in acute hospitals and special needs patients, with palliative care needs;
- Further development of community based service into a comprehensive multidisciplinary consultant led service;
- Specialist palliative care teams in each acute hospital group.

RIAN COUNSELLING SERVICES

- Feedback and Complaints mechanism for clients will be implemented across the region;
- Client satisfaction questionnaire will be developed and implemented;
- Waiting list strategy to be enhanced and clients with immediate needs to be offered short-term intervention;
- Initial appointment provision to be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure client access to appointment within four weeks;
- The provision of an out of hours service to be provided on a needs basis;
- Research project examining outcomes of counselling provision to be initiated.

TRAVELLER HEALTH SERVICES

The focus of the Traveller Health Unit in 2004 will be on supporting community development and primary healthcare throughout the region. This will enhance partnerships already formed between Travellers and health service providers, leading to a greater awareness of the factors influencing the health of the Traveller community.

- A Traveller specific drugs awareness programme will be delivered in Co. Louth and current service provision to Travellers with a disability will be reviewed;
- Literacy issues will be addressed through the development of appropriate signs and models of good practice on appointment systems. Antenatal care provision will be reviewed to ensure it is culturally sensitive and accessible. The dental service, in consultation with the primary healthcare project in Co. Meath, will identify the oral health needs of the Traveller community;
- Mental health provision for the Traveller community will be examined and good practice identified;
- A carer's course for Travellers will be designed and delivered.
- A series of information videos and DVDs on services will be developed with a particular

emphasis on overcoming literacy issues. This will also improve awareness among service providers of the particular difficulties faced by Travellers (and other ethnic and minority groups) in accessing services.

HOMELESS SERVICES

- A review of long-term residents in Homeless Hostels will take place;
- Planning of Housing Projects - the influence of Health Board staff will increase in the planning of housing projects through their involvement in homeless fora, County Development Boards and Partnership Board;
- Additional service accommodation options for vulnerable young adults who have left the child care system will be developed;
- The funding of the After Care Support Group and emergency support of young people after they have left the care system will be mainstreamed.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Food Business Control

The Food Control Programme will give priority to visits to high risk food premises in the Board's area. An increasing emphasis continues to be placed on the requirement for all businesses to introduce hazard analysis [HACCP] and any systems in place will be audited for compliance with legislation. This will involve some 2,500 visits to high and medium risk operations. Dealing with the investigations and assessments of applications for registration of food businesses will be within legal time limits. The Service will cooperate with, and contribute to, the national HACCP strategy coordinated by the FSAI.

Safe Food

Food sampling will continue at the 2003 level viz 800 samples (500 for microbiological analysis and 300 for compositional analysis) will be taken at all stages of food production and sale.

Procedures in place to respond to consumer food complaints will ensure a maximum response time of seven days. Contamination alerts received via the Rapid Alert System for Foodstuffs (RASFF) and other official sources will be responded to with the minimum of delay practicable.

Food Worker Training

Training of food workers will continue to concentrate on those in high risk businesses. Priority will be given to training in the Primary Course in Food Hygiene of the Environmental Health Officers Association. The aim will be to train 900 food workers in 2004.

Outdoor Event control

An environmental health monitoring programme covering food safety, drinking water quality, toilet accommodation, noise control and litter/refuse control will be implemented during all outdoor events. This will be achieved by liaison with the organisers, pre-event meetings and inspections.

NEHB Service Plan 2004

Tobacco Control

2004 will be marked by the implementation of the new Tobacco Regulations. Enforcement of the restrictions on smoking in public places will continue. Efforts will continue to ensure that proprietors of all relevant businesses are aware of, and comply with, their responsibilities regarding the provision of smoke free areas. The Environmental Health Service will cooperate with Health Board anti-smoking initiatives. The initiative to provide information to second level students on their rights and responsibilities regarding legislation on smoking restrictions will continue.

Renewal of Poisons Licences

All Poisons licences due for renewal under the Poisons Act 1961 will be investigated before licensing in addition to any new applications made. Routine visits will be made to the remainder where possible.

Drinking water

Monthly monitoring of all fluoridated water supplies will be undertaken with appropriate response times and targets set. Implementation of drinking water sampling programmes will continue in cooperation with appropriate local authorities including investigation of complaints of poor quality. Complaints regarding contaminated drinking water will be responded to as a matter of urgency. Advice to consumers on quality matters will continue.

Pre-school services and nursing homes

The Environmental Health Services operates as part of the inspection teams for pre-school services and nursing homes and will continue to visit these in 2004 in accordance with statutory duties.

CIVIL REGISTRATION MODERNISATION PROGRAMME

The implementation of the new Civil Registration system will continue in 2004. The first phase of the new registration system will be introduced. This caters for the electronic production of birth, death and marriage certificates on new certificate paper and the electronic registration of births and deaths.

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

It is planned to appoint an Audiology Scientist and two Audiologists in January 2004. With these posts in place the Board aims to quickly reduce waiting lists in order to ensure that in the case of adults that no adult is waiting for more than three months from time of referral. It is further planned that in the case of children, waiting lists will be significantly reduced by the end of 2004.

OPHTHALMOLOGY SERVICES

A review of Ophthalmology Services will be completed in early 2004. Progress will be made on the implementation of the recommendations of this report in so far as resources allow.

COMMUNITY WELFARE SERVICES

The Community Welfare Service will continue to cooperate with and will actively promote the development and implementation of more efficient and effective systems for the processing of medical card applications and reviews.

- Information packages, containing appropriate claim forms and customer friendly
- information leaflets explaining conditions of entitlement for different SWA schemes, will be developed and implemented on a pilot basis.
- Links to other agencies include Department of Social and Family Affairs, Money Advice and Budgeting Services, Womens Aid Services, Citizens Information Centres, Reception and Integration Agency, Department of Justice Probation and Welfare Service and other voluntary and statutory agencies will be strengthened where possible.
- One of the issues identified in 2003 was the increasing number of unfounded/malicious complaints made against Community Welfare Officers. This issue will be closely examined in 2004 with a view to the development of protocols for handling such complaints and the provision of appropriate training for staff.
- Accommodation standards, particularly in terms of staff health and safety, comfort and privacy for customers will be progressed as far as possible in a number of locations throughout the region.
- The trend of increasing numbers of asylum seekers moving into the region and in particular in Co. Meath has a significant impact on the level of service provision by CWO staff. The Mosney Centre, which can accommodate up to 900 people is placing increased demands on all staff at the centre. This issue will be further monitored in 2004. Work will continue on the development of a national database for Asylum Seekers.

ACUTE HOSPITAL SERVICES

- To continue implementation of the various strategies which are a core part of our service provision: 'Quality and Fairness', 'A Health Strategy for the People of the North East', the 'Cardiovascular Strategy', the 'Cancer Strategy', in conjunction with the implementation of the 'Hanly Report' and the 'Kinder Report';
- To continue implementation of the 'Bonner Report' in the Cavan Monaghan Hospital Group;
- To continue to reduce waiting lists through the utilisation of the Waiting List Initiative, the National Treatment Purchase Fund and Direct Access Services;
- To introduce Midwifery-led Units at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda and Cavan General Hospital.
- A number of permanent new appointments will be made in 2004, within the approved employment ceiling for the Acute Hospital programme. Many of these posts are currently filled in a temporary capacity.
- A joint Department of Surgery is to be

developed between Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda and Louth County Hospital, Dundalk.

Women's and Children's Services

- A Maternity Information System will be put in place.
- Further development of Gynaecological Services at Monaghan General Hospital and Our Lady's Hospital, Navan will take place.
- Colposcopy Services at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda will be further developed.

Obstetric and Paediatric Transfer Protocol

- Revised transfer protocols for pregnant women and newborns presenting to non-obstetric hospital facilities will be introduced at Our Lady's Hospital, Navan, Louth County Hospital and Monaghan General Hospital.
- As a positive action to promote an inclusive approach which respects difference, an information pamphlet advising of maternity and paediatric services will be printed in ten languages.

Regional Breast Services

- The One Stop Service to all patients attending the Symptomatic Breast Care Unit at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda, will be extended to provide two Mammography Suites, a dedicated Breast Ultrasound Suite and a dedicated Pathology Laboratory.
- A Lymphodema Clinic will commence.

Palliative Care

- A One Stop Clinic will commence in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda which will provide multi-disciplinary services.

Orthopaedic Services

- A Bone Bank service for Orthopaedic patients will be introduced to reduce the waiting time for total hip revision patients.

Renal Services

- The development of renal services in the region will continue in line with additional funding provided and in the context of the strategic alliance with Daisyhill Hospital, Newry.

Cardiovascular

- A permanent Consultant Cardiologist will be appointed in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda and the support team will be further developed.
- A heart failure clinic will be established at Monaghan General Hospital.
- A Cardiac Rehabilitation Unit will be developed at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda.

Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Unit Update

Cavan General Hospital was the venue for the first Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics (ALSO) training programme organised in the region, *writes Bridget Clarke.*

The Nursing & Midwifery Planning & Development Units in the North Eastern Health Board and the North Western Health Board were jointly funded by the National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing & Midwifery to franchise the ALSO Course from ALSO (U.K). This is a two day intensive multidisciplinary training course on the management of obstetric emergencies including maternal and neonatal resuscitation. A total of forty five midwives and four NCHDs took part in the course which was held last November. Twelve midwives from Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, 10 midwives and two NCHDs from Cavan General Hospital attended the course. The remaining candidates were from the NWHB, SEHB and the ERHA. The 14 course instructors who travelled to Cavan included Consultant Obstetricians and Lecturers, Professors of Midwifery, Consultant Midwives, Midwifery Managers and Staff Midwives.

Following a combination of continual assessments, practical and written examinations, a number of midwives who attended were selected as Potential Instructors. Having an ALSO Approved Instructor on the staff of a Maternity Hospital is a major advantage for on going in house education and training in the management of obstetric emergencies.

It is hoped that funding will be provided again this year to allow this course be run in the NWHB in 2004.

Bridget Clarke is Professional Development Co-ordinator for Practice Nurses and can be contacted at Tel: 041 6853206



Over a quarter of the poster presentations to the National Council for Nursing and Best Practice Midwifery Annual Study Day in November 2003 were nursing staff from the North Eastern Health Board.

This is an indication of the enthusiasm and commitment of nursing staff in this region. Congratulations to Drogheda based Clinical Nurse Specialist in Diabetes Emer Murphy who achieved a runner up prize for her poster on 'Paediatric Diabetes'.

Clinical Nurse Specialist Teresa Shortt, and Professional Development Co-ordinator for Practice Nurses in the NEHB, Bridget

Clarke, were also awarded a runner up prize for their poster presentation entitled 'Setting up a Nurse Led Cervical Screening Service in General Practice'. Over 90 posters were exhibited over the two day conference. Well done to all concerned.

The Diabetes Federation of Ireland

The Diabetes Federation of Ireland is meeting to re-establish a Monaghan branch on Monday, 23rd February 2004 at 8.00pm in the Glencarn Hotel, Castleblayney, Co Monaghan.

Guest speakers, dietitians, podiatrists, D.F.I. representatives, parents' support group representatives and diabetes sufferers will be attending. Local health care professionals will also give two short talks on diet and diabetes.

Congratulations and welcome to Rose Mooney and Deirdre Mulligan who have commenced new posts in the Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Unit.

Rose Mooney is the Regional Co-ordinator for Elderly Care Services and her contact details are: Tel 041-6853206 or email rose.mooney@nehb.ie

Deirdre Mulligan is the CNM2 in Workforce Planning and her contact details are: Tel 041-6853206 or email deirdre.mulligan@nehb.ie

EXTENSION OF SERVICES TO INCLUDE CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

In partnership with Enable Ireland the North Eastern Health Board recently expanded the Early Intervention Service in Cavan/Monaghan to include children under six who have a diagnosis of autism or who are queried to be on the autism spectrum.

Under the new agreement which came into effect on January 23rd, an Enable Ireland Team composed of a range of professionals, will deliver Early Intervention Services to younger children in the region. The Early Intervention Service is designed to provide professional expertise and support at an early age for children with autism or who are queried to be on the autism spectrum.

The decision to expand the Early Intervention Service to include younger children was taken after the North Eastern Health Board carried out a comprehensive review of health related autism support services within the region in consultation with the Service Providers, Families/Carers and Advocates of People with Autism and Professionals within the Services.

As part of the expansion of the Early Intervention Service children and families will have access to an Enable Ireland Team which includes an early services manager, a social worker, speech & language therapist, physiotherapist, psychologist, occupational therapist, child and family support worker and staff providing administration support.

Two extra therapy posts have recently been added to the Enable Ireland Team to cater for the additional children who will now access the extended service which commenced in Cavan/Monaghan on 23rd January 2004.

The North Eastern Health Board and Enable Ireland look forward to working together to advance this service and will be engaging in ongoing evaluation and review with the families involved to ensure the service is meeting their needs.

New Initiative for St Joseph's

Under a new initiative launched in December 2003 40 clients who attend in-patient services and day hospital services at St Joseph's Hospital, Trim were brought to Cappagh Hospital for bone dexta scans to identify early signs of osteoporosis.



Pictured above are some of the first group from St Joseph's Day Hospital to attend Cappagh Hospital under the new initiative.

Paddy Gantley retires after 40 years service

All of the members of staff at St Joseph's Hospital, Trim send best wishes for good health and happiness to Paddy Gantley on his retirement. Paddy Gantley, minibus driver for the Day Hospital at St Joseph's retired in November after 40 years service.



Pictured back row l-r: Henry Anderson, Sr. Margaret Mary Murphy, Sr. Camillus Buckley, Anne Murray, Paddy Gantley, Vera Clarke, Ellen Collins. Front row l-r: Mena Kelly, Sr. Regina Gleeson, Kay Carry, Michele Rispin.

Louth County Initiatives Impress Health Promoting Hospital Delegates

Delegates travelled from Scotland, Italy and Lithuania and from all over Ireland to attend the first All-Ireland Health Promoting Hospital Network Conference in Co Cavan last October.

The Louth County Hospital's initiative 'Improved Communication through Partnership' was accepted for oral presentation at the conference in Cabra Castle, Kingscourt. This initiative involved a review of communication systems and documentation within the hospital by several multidisciplinary staff groups under the auspices of the regional partnership committee. The initiative was presented by Nuala McKeown, Research Assistant and leader of one of the groups, and Rose Byrne, Health Promoting Hospital Coordinator in Louth County Hospital. The presentation gave an overview of the many projects undertaken by the groups outlining their excellent work and positive outcomes. The Regional Partnership Facilitator, Mai Kearns McAdam and the joint chairs of the local partnership committee, Eilish Mc Keown and Geraldine Mc Cabe were at hand to answer questions from delegates.

A very successful joint initiative between the Emergency Medical Technicians, the Health Promotion Co-ordinator and the A&E staff in the Louth County Hospital was also highlighted at the conference. The highly successful 'Children's Art Competition on Road Safety Awareness' was also accepted for poster presentation. Senior EMT John Tuite represented the Ambulance Service at the conference. Many thanks to Emer Smyth CVS Facilitator, who helped design the impressive poster pictured on the right.



Anna Mohan and Cora Flannery, Cavan/Monaghan health services with Michael Flannery, Seosamh O Maolalair and Jo Hardwick, Health Service/National Partnership Forum at The North Eastern Regional Women's Network Winter Conference 2003 in The Nuremore Hotel. (See Page 11)

Staff Training as New Incident Reporting Policy Comes In

The implementation of the Incident Reporting Policy has now commenced with an extensive training and information programme being provided to staff across all North Eastern Health Board services, writes *Cornelia Stuart*.

The new national database for recording incidents and near misses, known as STARSWeb, is now operational and from January 1st 2004 all incidents and near misses, clinical and non-clinical, which occur in the NEHB will be recorded on this database. Staff training on the new Incident Reporting Policy is now taking place. If training has not yet been provided to your department/unit, all incidents and near misses, both clinical and non-clinical, should continue to be reported on the existing forms through the usual route, i.e. forwarded through local line management to senior management in the particular location/service.

In the case of acute hospital services, senior management will then forward the report forms to the designated Risk Management Department, where they will be entered into the STARSWeb database.

With regard to the non acute services, all Incident Report Forms for clinical and non-clinical incidents and near misses will be forwarded by senior management at local

level to the Risk Management Department in Kells.

Incident Report Forms should no longer be forwarded to the Finance Department as was previously the case.

The introduction of an Incident Reporting Database will enable periodic reports to be provided to local management indicating the number of incidents being reported. This will help to identify trends, carry out incident reviews etc. Ultimately we will all learn from such incidents with a view to avoiding recurrence. Staff are actively encouraged to report incidents and near misses, promptly and openly, within a framework of a just culture.

In the case of acute hospital services to obtain details of the training and information programme in your area or for further information on the Board's Incident Reporting Policy, please contact your designated Risk Management Office; Louth Meath Hospital Group at (041) 9875220.

Cavan Monaghan Hospital Group at (049) 4376243.

All other services should contact the Corporate Risk Management Office, Kells, at (046) 9280539.

NEHB to Roll Out Pilot Midwifery Led Service

In accordance with the health board's key principles and philosophy for Maternity Services "to develop a woman-centred, quality service that is safe, accessible and sustainable", the North Eastern Health Board is pleased to announce the phased expansion of maternity services.

The Board will now offer a pilot Midwifery Led Service for women assessed to be at low risk of having a complicated pregnancy or labour. The midwife will be the lead professional and the ante and post-natal service will be offered in partnership with the woman's general practitioner, under the Maternity and Infant Care Scheme. Care in labour and delivery will be provided by the midwife in a homely, safe environment.

In order to progress Midwife-Led Services in the North Eastern Health Board, pilot Midwifery-Led Units (MLU) will be established at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital,

Drogheda and Cavan General Hospital. The School of Nursing & Midwifery Studies, Trinity College has been commissioned by the Board to facilitate the implementation and to evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot units.

The MLUs will offer midwifery-led care for healthy women throughout the antenatal, intranatal and postnatal periods. The care to be provided by the MLUs is based on the philosophy of pregnancy and birth as normal physiological processes. The units seek to promote this philosophy by recognising, respecting and safe-guarding normal processes during normal pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period.

Two Care Process Groups, (Louth/Meath and Cavan/Monaghan) were established during 2001 to plan the development and implementation of the services. Regional sub-committees of the Care Process Groups

were subsequently established and have been progressing work required to implement the services. These sub-committees include Midwifery-Led Units Project Management Group, Guideline Development Group, Public Health Nurse/Midwifery and General Practitioner/Midwifery Liaison Committees among others.

To effectively evaluate the service, the pilot Midwifery-Led Units are being established within the context of a randomised trial (to be termed the MidU study). For the duration of the pilot, access to the services will be through participation in the study only. The outcome of the study will provide the Board with an evaluation of the effectiveness of midwifery-led care in Midwifery-Led Units and identify areas to be considered in facilitating the roll-out of the service to other hospitals in the North East.

CEO Launches NERWN Strategic Plan

The North Eastern Regional Women's Network (NERWN) held its Winter Conference 'Benchmarking - Sustaining Progress - how to get the money in your pocket' in the Nuremore Hotel, Carrickmacross on Thursday, December 4th, 2003. Mr Paul Robinson, CEO, NEHB launched the NERWN Strategic Plan and in his opening address reiterated its key objectives which are congruent with the recently launched Health Strategy for the People of the North East.

The key objectives are to create opportunities where women can develop management and networking skills and promote a management style that is both effective and supportive to staff. The benefits of the NERWN include sharing information, building solidarity, providing a forum for ongoing consultation and review, contributing to the development of models of good practice through sharing experience, raising awareness on issues of common concern and reducing isolation. Key note speakers on the day were Mr JJ Tevlin, Employee Relations Manager, NEHB who outlined what is meant by Sustaining Progress and its implications for the NEHB, Mr Jim Mullery, Union Nominee, Regional Partnership Committee who gave a presentation of Sustaining Progress from a union perspective and Ms Breda Hayes, Director of Nursing, St Mary's Hospital, Phoenix Park, Dublin who outlined the practical experience of the verification process in her hospital. This was followed by workshops at which associates were given an opportunity to contribute their ideas on how Sustaining Progress can be implemented within the NEHB.

The conference was attended by NERWN associates representing all grades within the organisation and also representatives from the statutory and voluntary organisations.



Pictured at the NERWN Winter Conference 2003 in the Nuremore Hotel were l-r: Steering Group Committee member Nuala Rafferty; Ass. Dir. Nursing, St Mary's Hospital, Castleblayney, Margaret Fleming; Ass. Dir. Of Nursing, St. Davnet's Hospital, Anna Mohan; Paul Robinson, CEO NEHB; Jim Mullery, SIPTU speaker; Mai Kearns McAdam, Partnership Facilitator; Yvonne Burke, Louth County Hospital; JJ Tevlin, Employee Relations Manager; Miriam Ryan, Carer Training Trim and Celine Meehan, Louth Physiotherapy Manager.



Thirteen participants from the NEHB recently took part in a Change Facilitation Development Programme. The group are pictured above after meeting with the CEO and Management Team on 29th January 2004.

Back Row l-r: Mai Kearns McAdam, Donagh Russell, Rosaleen Harlin, Ray Sheehan, Miriam Mc Kenna.
Front Row l-r: Paul Robinson, CEO, Rose McCaffrey, Ann Coyle, Fran Thompson.

Participants not in photo: Ann Bourke, Catherine Gormley-O'Rorke, Ethna McQuillan, Anne Melly and Pat Smyth.

