

PRESS RELEASE

02 April 2009

NURSING HOMES IRELAND LAUNCHES “DON’T MAKE A BAD SITUATION WORSE” CAMPAIGN DEMANDING INCREASE INVESTMENT IN LONG TERM CARE

NURSING HOME OWNERS TO TAKE LEGAL ACTION ON NON PAYMENTS BY HSE

Nursing Homes Ireland today, 02 April 2009, held an unprecedented national meeting of all private and voluntary nursing home owners in the Ballsbridge Inn, Dublin 4. The meeting is to launch NHI campaign “Don’t Make A Bad Situation Worse” to address the continued inequities and inconsistencies in policy and implementation in relation to long term care in Ireland.

Said CEO of Nursing Homes Ireland, Tadhg Daly *“There is outrage amongst members about the current situation, where the Minister is consistently failing to keep her promises to older people and their families, and to our members who care for them. Our members are on the frontline – they see every day the stress, uncertainty and fear caused by financial pressure on older people in long term care. Our older people deserve better. Ireland spends so little on long term care – 0.6% of GDP compared with 1.9% in the UK and considerably more elsewhere.” **

Continued Daly *“The strength of feeling in the sector is due to a combination of failures by the Minister and the HSE, not a single issue, all of which are making life even more difficult for those in long term care and their families. Subventions to older people have been cut, the Fair Deal legislation has been delayed, the HSE is refusing to move older people from acute hospitals to a more appropriate and cost effective nursing home environment, a proposed registration and inspection fee structure that is set at punitive and disproportionate levels, and the HSE is not meeting some of its contractual obligations in relation to our members. This is a situation that is not sustainable for older people and it is not sustainable for nursing home owners.”*

The four key demands of the campaign are:

- Increased investment in long term care and immediate enactment of the long awaited ‘fair deal’ for older people
- A licence fee structure that is fair and proportionate, ie not greater than a third of that in Northern Ireland (£46 per bed per year) to reflect the lower investment in long term care in this State
- That the Minister must insist from the HSE on transparency, accountability, value for money and patient choice in the allocation of funds made available for long term care
- That the HSE honour and fulfill its contractual obligations with nursing homes and the older people in their care.

In addition to carrying out a nationwide lobbying campaign, a number of NHI members are taking legal action against the HSE for non-payment of considerable monies owed to nursing home owners by the HSE for the contracted and Delayed Discharge Initiative beds.

Commented Daly, *"We must act now and work together to secure a strong and viable private and voluntary sector nursing home sector in Ireland, or we can watch the Minister for Health and Children and the HSE extinguish the ability of the sector to continue to give the high standards of affordable, accessible care that we demand of ourselves and that the older people in our care deserve."*

Ends

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Note to Editors:

Table 1 Huber & Rodrigues – GDP Figures