

CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Grúpa Ospidéal
Oirthear na hÉireann



Sláinte Leanaí Éireann



Children's Health Ireland



Working together, caring for you



University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh



SOUTH / SOUTH WEST
HOSPITAL GROUP



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



NUI Galway
OÉ Gaillimh



Grúpa Ospidéal Bhaile Átha Cliath Lár Tire FSS
Dublin Midlands Hospital Group HSE
Páirtneir Acadúil Coláiste na Tríonóide Baile Átha Cliath
Academic Partner Trinity College Dublin



Grúpa Ollscoile Cúram Sláinte
University Health Care Group



UNIVERSITY
OF MEDICINE
AND HEALTH
SCIENCES



RCSI HOSPITALS
OSPIDÉIL RCSI

CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS



Professor Paul Burke, MD FRCSI, Associate Professor, Vice Dean (Health Sciences) - University of Limerick, Adjunct Professor of Surgery, UL GEMS, Chief Academic Officer - UL Hospital Group

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Professor Joseph Keane, Consultant Respiratory Physician, Head of Clinical Medicine - St James's Hospital, Dublin Midlands Hospital Group HSE

Professor Timothy Lynch, Consultant Neurologist
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Professor Owen Smith, UCD Professor of Paediatric and Adolescent Medicine, Consultant Paediatric Haematologist at Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin, Chief Academic Lead to the Children's Hospital Group



Professor Helen Whelton, Head of College of Medicine and Health - University College Cork, Chief Academic Officer - HSE South, South West Hospital Group

A LETTER FROM THE CAO GROUP

As Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) we act as a link between our hospital groups and universities – ensuring innovation, research and teaching remain at the forefront of Irish healthcare. As COVID-19 made itself known throughout Ireland in 2020 we began to harness our resources to focus on areas that needed urgent attention.

In the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic the CAOs worked with their partner universities, hospital groups and industry to assist with laboratory diagnostics. The CAOs discussed diagnostics capabilities with Director of NVRL Cillian DeGascun as well as working closely with the HSE and Genuity Science to overcome initial obstacles in this area.

We have worked with the Department of Health, HSE and the Health Research Board (HRB) to establish a National Covid-19 Biobank – ensuring the expertise and knowledge of our university and hospital group colleagues were engaged in this positive step forward for Irish healthcare research.

We successfully pursued funding for simulation training for healthcare staff and instigated the creation of a National Simulation Strategy for 2021. We worked closely with the National Doctors Training and Planning Office (NDTP) and with Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer in the HSE, to ensure the training needs of all healthcare staff and students were met during the pandemic.

Ensuring undergraduate and postgraduate healthcare training was not negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic was another area of focus. We worked with the HSE and Department of Health to highlight this on-going issue and find possible solutions.

With a focus on further linking academia and Irish healthcare, for the benefit of patients, staff and students we met with CEO of the HSE Paul Reid and the Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly, to discuss how an Academic Health Science System can assist with the future development and implementation of Slaintecare.

We aim to continue our work into 2021 – focusing on the firm establishment of a National Covid-19 Biobank with the HRB, progressing the National Simulation Strategy with the NDTP, advancing an Academic Health Science System for Ireland with Minister Donnelly's office and working to further represent staff and students working in a variety of healthcare roles.

- THE CAO GROUP

DRIVING THE ACADEMIC HEALTH SCIENCE SYSTEM IN IRELAND

The Hospital Group post of Chief Academic Officer is pivotal in ensuring that the health, education and innovation sectors work together to accelerate the application of research for patient benefit in the health service. By linking the CAO role to a post in the university, the possibility of fully coordinated engagement with the academic partner is greatly enhanced. This important link between university and hospital group promotes the alignment of university resources, financial and human, with the hospital group mission and strategy while providing a visible conduit for industry.

improving outputs and efficiencies within the system and advancing patient care. The unique partnership between hospital and university, built up over the last six years, is also important in developing further an Academic Health Science System in Ireland and therefore enhancing the core tenets of Slaintecare.

In 2020 the CAO group met with Paul Reid, Chief Executive of the HSE to discuss how they might assist in the development and execution of Slaintecare as well as highlighting the further need for research funding in the area of biobanking and

The University/Health Service linkage, led by the CAO, is important for the creation of a culture and environment where teaching, research and innovation are at the centre of our health care system. Where our network of teaching hospitals is focused on learning and best practice in the translation of research evidence. This practice is at the heart of an academic health sciences system model.

An Academic Health Science System (AHSS) is a partnership between a university and healthcare providers (both in hospitals and the community) focusing on research, clinical services, education and training. AHSS are intended to ensure that medical research breakthroughs lead to direct clinical benefits for patients. The development of an AHSS will contribute to the Irish economy as well as attracting international staff.

The CAOs believe that the development of an Academic Health Science Centre is a very worthwhile endeavour, which will benefit Irish healthcare as well as the Irish economy. This is why in 2020 the CAOs will focus on bringing the concept of an Academic Health Science System further into the public forum.

As the innovation, teaching and research voice of their Hospital Groups and Universities the CAOs are also in a position to offer insight and advice into how to map Slaintecare onto our current health system – therefore

simulation training. The CAOs also discussed the pivotal role of the Academic Health Science System in reformatting the structure of Irish healthcare.

In December a number of the CAOs held a successful meeting with the Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly and his colleagues in the Department of Health to discuss the concept of an Academic Health Science System in Ireland, how it should be structured, how best to support research, teaching and innovation and how the Academic Health Science System can work within Slaintecare. The CAOs will follow up with the Minister in early 2021 to outline further their plans for developing academic medicine in Ireland.

Going into 2021 the CAOs will will work with the Department of Health and HSE to explore further the application of the Academic Health Science Centre model in an Irish healthcare setting and how best to integrate it with the rollout of Slaintecare.

NATIONAL COVID-19 BIOBANK

Early in the fight against COVID-19 the CAOs recognised the need for a National COVID-19 Biobank to collect, collate and carry out further research on COVID-19 in the Irish population in order to be better prepared for future waves.

After weekly meetings in the first few months of the pandemic the CAOs penned an open letter to the Irish Times on the 3rd of June 2020, outlining the immediate need for a National COVID-19 Biobank. The article outlined the massive research and clinical benefits such a biobank would have during the subsequent waves of COVID-19 in the population.

The CAOs then engaged the HSE office of Research and Development, along with the Department of Health to advise of the urgent need for biobanking in Ireland.

Following this meeting the CAOs drafted a proposal paper for the Department of Health on the need for a national biobank and how it might work in an Irish context. A National COVID-19 Biobank implementation meeting was then held to advance the concept across the HSE and Department of Health. The CAOs also engaged with the Health Research Board to discuss how a biobank would be established in an Irish setting.

Through feedback from those carrying out biobank research from within the different universities in the



“We need to be prepared to provide support to our clinician researchers so they can distinguish asymptomatic carriers from the severely affected, and also those more likely to mount a meaningful immune response, and those survivors of severe Covid-19 who will develop chronic complications, as well as finding a cure. This will allow the doctors to direct scarce resources, intensive-care beds and novel antiviral agents to those most at need.” - CAO Letter to the Irish Times

Professor Tim Lynch of UCD Health Affairs and CAO of the Irish East Hospital Group was also interviewed by the Irish Independent, on behalf of the CAO group, to discuss the importance of academic medicine in Irish healthcare and the urgent resources needed for the creation of a National COVID-19 Biobank. Prof Lynch highlighted how a National COVID-19 Biobank allows for the collection, and storage, of samples from patients with and without Covid-19, which would be helpful in determining how different people were going to respond to the virus and how best to treat them, as well as supporting antibody testing for the Irish population.

Noting the need for an all Ireland approach to any proposed plans for a National COVID-19 Biobank the CAOs organised to meet with colleagues in Northern Ireland who had successfully established biobanks to find out how they could avoid any potential pitfalls and successfully establish a biobank in an Irish setting.

CAO group the idea of a networked approach with a hub and spoke model for the proposed biobank was first broached. The CAOs then fed this information back to the HRB in a further discussion on the biobank application before a formal case was made to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform with the HRB now leading on the planned biobank on behalf of the Department of Health. The CAOs then received confirmation that the Department of Health had agreed to fund a 5-year National COVID-19 Biobank through the HRB and that universities/hospital groups would be asked to apply in early 2021.

As there was a need for further information on the current landscape of Irish biobanks the CAOs created and begun distributing a biobank questionnaire within their respective universities and hospital groups in November. The questionnaire was completed by leading biobankers and furnished the CAOs with information on

what was already being collected nationally and what funding and resources were needed to expand biobanking services in Ireland. This information was then used by the HRB to inform the potential structure and resources needed for a National COVID-19 Biobank.

Maintaining the all Ireland approach the CAOs asked Prof Mark Lawler from Queens University Belfast to present to the CAO group on the potential of a national biobank in late 2020, which gave a greater insight into the possibility of expanding any future COVID-19 biobank into other areas of infectious disease in the future.

In early December the CAOs and HRB organised a biobank webinar to outline the structure of the proposed National COVID-19 Biobank to prospective partners across the country. This conference was very well attended and allowed both the CAOs and their colleagues in universities and hospital groups throughout the country to ask the HRB questions on the proposed model and discuss any possible pitfalls.

The CAOs took detailed feedback from this conference and appointed two Co-PIs to lead the application from UCD and Trinity with support from NUIG, UL, RCSI, UCC, CHI. The application to the HRB will have oversight from the CAO group and will be submitted in early 2021 with the aim to have fully established the National COVID-19 Biobank in 2021.



NATIONAL COVID-19 BIOBANK TIMELINE

2020



JUNE

- CAOs publish a joint letter in the Irish Times advising of urgent need for COVID-19 Biobank
- Prof Tim Lynch interviewed by Irish Independent about biobank

JULY

- CAOs reached out to Northern Ireland biobankers for advice

AUGUST

- CAOs engaged with HSE R&D Office and Dept. Health

SEPTEMBER

- CAOs drafted a biobank proposal for Dept. of Health
- National COVID-19 Biobank Implementation Meeting held with HSE
- CAOs met with HRB to discuss biobank proposal

OCTOBER

- CAOs advised Dept. of Health on proposed biobank structure and resources
- HRB now leading on biobank on behalf of Dept. of Health
- Hub and spoke model for biobank agreed by CAOs and HRB
- Prof Mark Lawler from Queens University Belfast presents to CAOs on NI biobanking
- CAOs meet with HRB

NOVEMBER

- Biobanking questionnaire developed by CAOs and sent to all biobankers in 7 universities/hospital groups

DECEMBER

- Biobank questionnaire responses submitted to the HRB for reference
- HRB and CAOs host National COVID-19 Biobank webinar
- CAOs agree two co-PIs from Trinity and UCD will lead biobank application

SIMULATION TRAINING

An area of increasing concern for the CAOs as Covid-19 progressed in early 2020 was the urgent need to develop and fund simulation training for healthcare staff and students. As the Chief Academic Officers oversee the training environment for all disciplines at all career grades, there was a clear need to address the issue of continued training for healthcare staff during Covid-19.

The impact of Covid-19 on medical training in Ireland continues to be a major concern for the future of Irish healthcare as the ability to competently train and progress the careers of healthcare workers has been significantly impacted. The CAOs believed the solution to the training crisis lay in the development of the internationally recognized hybrid of apprentice and medical simulation training models.

Increasing simulation-based training provides a potential evidence-based solution to the sudden change in the training ecosystem due to Covid-19 and will contribute to the maintenance of standards in education of HCWs in Ireland. An additional benefit of greater use of simulation-based training is the reduced exposure and infection risk for both students and patients.

In the context of Covid-19, simulation was already being used in Ireland and internationally to prepare and train staff in core procedural skills, team behaviors, protocol development and patient flow. At a time when access to training was severely compromised, simulation demonstrated considerable strength in being an effective alternative. The ongoing impact of Covid-19 highlighted the need to enhance and expand these training opportunities.

The CAOs spoke with colleagues in the HSE and in particular the office of the Office of National Doctors Training and Planning (NDTP) to ensure they were fully aware of the issues facing staff and students with regards further training during Covid-19. The CAOs also drew up a Simulation Education Submission document for the Department of Health to outline their proposed

THE SIMULATION PROPOSAL

The CAOs wanted to ensure their hospital groups and universities were equipped to deal with the Covid-19 related critical impact on career progression and to future proof training systems against any new crisis. To achieve this, there needed to be effective and accessible simulation facilities and programmes available to all students and trainees. Optimal effectiveness of simulation required developing simulation facilities for hospital sites with audiovisual technology and technical support personnel that have the following areas:

- A technical skills area with task trainers across the spectrum of healthcare disciplines that would be used to teach core and complex procedural skills, allow for supervised training and feedback and can be used in the assessment of competency. The development of agreed task analyses and checklists for each core skill could be developed across Schools and training bodies, to ensure quality and standards.
- A manikin based area that could mimic a clinical bed space (ward or ED) and a simple operating area or delivery suite where teams could come together to learn patient management, decision making and team working and learn how to trouble shoot complex cases. A library of core scenarios aligned to learning objectives and competencies and to domains of professional practice could be developed by conducting mapping exercises. A debriefing space for learners to receive and give feedback would act as a safe learning environment.
- An area for learning and assessment of communication skills where learners receive feedback from supervisors and the 'patients' and patients could contribute to the learners' development.

simulation training plan and how it would be implemented in the hospital groups. As a group the CAOs also wrote to the Higher Education Authority and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science outlining the urgent need for simulation funding within the health system in May 2020.

Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer of the HSE met with the CAOs to discuss simulation and any proposed funding that might be needed in early June. The CAOs and Dr Henry discussed the need for a national approach to simulation across the health sector. It was proposed that the CAOs would lead on a National Simulation Strategy to be submitted to the HSE by June 2021 - outlining the proposed needs and resource for further investment in simulation training for staff in Irish healthcare. The National Simulation Strategy will be led by Dr. Dara Byrne, Director of Simulation at ICAPSS and Saolta University Health Care Group with the CAO group providing oversight.

To further the simulation discussion as hospital group level the CAOs also joined the Association of Hospital Groups CEOs meeting and presented on the various projects they had been involved with, in particular the urgent need for simulation funding in order to ensure staff and trainees were appropriately trained.

In July the National Doctors Training and Planning office wrote to the CAOs to advise that each of the 7 hospital groups would receive €130,000 towards simulation funding, to be used in the latter half of 2020 upon completion of a simulation application. This funding could be used for the purchase of simulation equipment, which would be of benefit to all healthcare professionals and student training. The CAOs spearheaded these applications and ensured each hospital group supplied the NDTP with the appropriate application for consideration, inclusive of funding breakdown and business case. The CAOs worked with simulation experts in their universities and hospital groups, along with their hospital group training leads to ensure their simulation applications covered the

specific needs of their groups. After successfully applying for simulation funding all 7 groups were awarded their funding in the autumn of 2020 with the South, South West Hospital Group and the Ireland East Hospital Group matching the €130,000 funding. Saolta UHG funded a full time simulation technician, programme coordinator and simulation nurse educator.

The CAOs then wrote to Dr Colm Henry in September outlining the progress thus far on creating a National Simulation Strategy and the ongoing need for simulation funding going into 2021.

In October and November Prof Dara Byrne presented to the CAO group on her progress thus far in creating a National Simulation Strategy with relevant input from national and international experts in this field. The purpose of the strategy is to provide a strategic framework, supported by practical guidance, which allows hospital groups to develop their own strategy for simulation learning. As there will be a further need for trainers in simulation in the future the CAO group agreed with Prof Byrne to look into funding one person per hospital site to attend a one year simulation diploma in NUIG. By ensuring staff are appropriately trained there will be a continuous flow of trainers for staff and students and it will allow staff at each site with the appropriate leadership skills to lead on simulation.

In early December the CAOs received notification from Dr Colm Henry's office that the HSE would be offering a further one off payment of €150,000 to each hospital group in 2021 to assist in simulation training. The funding was approved ahead of the delivery of the National Simulation Strategy in June 2021 in order to facilitate the continued development of simulation.

SIMULATION TRAINING BY HOSPITAL GROUP

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, GALWAY / SAOLTA UNIVERSITY HEALTH CARE GROUP

In 2020 Professor Dara Byrne, Professor of Simulation Education in Healthcare at the School of Medicine, NUIG and the Director of Simulation at Irish Centre for Applied Patient Safety and Simulation was asked by the CAOs to lead on the creation of a National Simulation Strategy. The strategy will cover the simulation needs for Ireland going forward and how best it can be used to train all healthcare staff. The national strategy should be ready to present to the HSE in June 2021. Professor Byrne also leads a Postgraduate Diploma in Healthcare Simulation and Patient Safety in NUIG, which is unique in the country. The CAOs are considering offering places to staff within their Hospital Groups to complete this Diploma in Healthcare Simulation and Patient Safety, which would allow them to become local champions in simulation. Saolta/NUIG are currently developing a bespoke Simulation facility which will support simulation based education onsite and across the Saolta Group at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Funding provided by NDTP will support the development of group wide AV infrastructure.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK/ SSW HOSPITAL GROUP

In 2020 the SSW Hospital Group recruited two Training Leads and support staff to ensure adherence to the Medical Council requirements for specialist training in the region and to support the delivery of training for NCHDs in their clinical sites. Throughout 2020 the SSW Hospital Group with the CAO, developed a plan for governance and enhancement of training in each of the hospital group sites as well as carrying out a survey of all NCHDs and drawing up a list of follow up actions to work on for 2021. A series of structured meetings is underway in each site to explore ways in which the group can support training, including simulation. The NDTP funding received for simulation training in 2020 was matched by the hospital group and so gave further budget to fund staff time to guide the use of the equipment and infrastructure funded by the NDTP.. The plan for simulation support builds on current strong collaboration between SSWHG and the UCC ASSERT simulation centre.

SIMULATION TRAINING BY HOSPITAL GROUP

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK/UL HOSPITALS GROUP

The NDTP funding was welcomed by the UL Hospitals Group, as it coincided with the refurbishment of the Simulation Laboratory in the Clinical Education Research Centre. A fulltime Simulation Technician was appointed (jointly funded by the Hospital Group and the University). A new audio visual system will also be installed. Funding for this project is coming in part from the University, in order to teach clinical students and Interns. As a result of COVID-19, there is an even greater need to expand the audio visual capabilities of the simulation facility to transmit training scenarios to a wider audience of clinical trainees. Some of the funding will be orientated towards this requirement. The extra additional funding will also help equip the laboratory to the level required for postgraduate educational purposes which is also being supported by additional funding from the UL Hospitals Group.

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN/ DUBLIN MIDLANDS HOSPITAL GROUP

St. James's Hospital plans to develop inter-professional translational simulation on the hospital campus. Translational simulation ensures that patient safety, clinical excellence and operational excellence are the drivers of training for all our staff. The funding received by St. James's Hospital will be utilised to improve AV facilities and to develop In Situ Simulation across the hospital. An interprofessional simulation committee has been established at St. James's Hospital and future collaboration with the "Trinity Simulation Facility, School of Nursing" and Tallaght University Hospital is planned.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN/ IRELAND EAST HOSPITAL GROUP

The funding received by the NDTP for clinical simulation training in 2020 was used to provide simulation equipment for use by healthcare staff throughout the Ireland East Hospital Group and UCD. The NDTP funding was matched by the hospital group and so gave further budget to expand simulation facilities. The Hospital Group appointed two Training Leads across their two main hospital sites - SVUH and MMUH in 2020. EHG also hopes to appoint two Simulation Leads in 2021, who will explore simulation needs throughout all hospitals in the group. The newly appointed Training Leads are also establishing IEHG/UCD virtual Grand Rounds that will act as a multidisciplinary education and training meeting.

SIMULATION TRAINING BY HOSPITAL GROUP

RCSI/ RCSI HOSPITALS

Within the RCSI Hospital Group the simulation funding received from the NDTP was utilized to improve teaching links throughout the Hospital Group by upgrading the existing audio-visual facilities. In the RCSI Hospital Group there was a particular focus on upgrading the audio-visual facilities in Cavan Hospital. RCSI have also appointed Professor Walter Eppich as the Chair of Simulation. A considerable amount has also been spent on the development of 26 York Street, which houses the most advanced clinical healthcare simulation centre in Europe.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH IRELAND

Simulation funding received by CHI will help support the simulation strategy by developing a state of the art simulation centre in order to be at the forefront of paediatric simulation training in Ireland. The funding received in 2020 was used to upgrade CHI's current low fidelity simulators and to fund the application of virtual reality to build a portfolio of simulation modules that could be used across different simulation training programmes. The funding also facilitated remote training and mentorship. In order to kick start the paediatric simulation strategy, CHI have also developed a governance framework for simulation training with the establishment of two key strategic groups, CHI Simulation Education and Research Working Group and the CHI Simulation Centre Design Working Group. Both of these groups are working towards integrating simulation training on to a single site within CHI and enhancing the ICT and infrastructures to support various simulation training programmes.

SIMULATION TRAINING TIMELINE

2020



MAY

- CAOs wrote to the NDTP, HEA, Dept. Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation, Science advising of need for simulation training
- CAOs made a Simulation Education submission to Department of Health

JUNE

- CAOs met with Dr Colm Henry
- CAOs agreed to lead on National Simulation Strategy
- Prof Dara Byrne appointed to create the National Simulation Strategy
- CAOs presented to the Association of Hospital Group CEOs

JULY

- NDTP advised of €130k simulation training funding for each hospital group once application made

AUGUST

- All 7 hospital groups submit successful simulation applications to NDTP
- IEHG and SSW Hospital Group agree to match the NDTP simulation funding

SEPTEMBER

- CAOs meet Dr Colm Henry to give progress report and request further funding for 2021

OCTOBER

- Prof Byrne presents to CAOs on progress of National Simulation Strategy
- CAOs agree to fund staff at each clinical site to complete a simulation diploma in NUIG

DECEMBER

- HSE confirm a further €150k simulation training funding for 2021
- Prof Byrne presents to the CAOs on a timeline for the National Simulation Strategy

STUDENT PLACEMENTS

From the very start of the COVID-19 pandemic the CAOs were acutely aware of the fast approaching issues healthcare students would face in accessing training placements. This issue affected medical students, physiotherapy, occupational health, radiology, dietetics, audiology, speech and language, nursing and many more healthcare students.

In early December the CAOs contacted Prof Brian MacCraith as chair of the new Covid-19 Vaccine Taskforce, established by the Department of Health, to advise the urgent need to consider all healthcare students as part of the workforce and therefore include them in the early rollout of the vaccine.

The CAOs made student placements and the issues facing this area a standing item on their weekly meetings throughout the pandemic, sharing knowledge, expertise and contacts across the 7 hospital groups and universities.

In May the CAOs highlighted the on-going placement issues for healthcare students to Dr Colm Henry's office in the HSE and outlined how simulation funding and the increase in staff available to offer placements to students in the hospital and community sector would improve this situation during the Covid-19 pandemic. In June Dr Henry's office wrote to each of the 7 hospital groups advising that student placements should continue throughout the pandemic as they are essential to student training and ensure the workforce is replenished every year.

The CAOs are currently exploring the idea of increased cooperation with the Community Health Organisations to investigate the possibility of further students being placed in the community setting to carry out placement going forward.

The CAO's hope to continue working with Chief Clinical Officer HSE Dr Colm Henry and National Lead, National Health & Social Care Professions Office, HSE Jackie Reed to further establish, maintain and improve student placements in all healthcare settings across the HSE.

Unlike in other countries, in Ireland there is no formal structure for the allocation of HSCP clinical placements in the health services. Instead, the education programmes have to approach therapists individually, who may volunteer or not to take students, rather than having a set number of students allocated to a service. Given the issues facing HSCPs in particular the CAOs met with the CEOs of the hospital groups and Dr Colm Henry to advise of the on-going and urgent issues surrounding access to training placements. As the year progressed the therapies were further negatively impacted with Speech and Language students only filling 6% of their placement quota by September 2020.

Going into 2021 there are many areas of on-going concern for the CAOs with regards to training placements for audiology, physiotherapy, dietetics and speech and language therapy students. The CAOs hope to continue their dialogue with the Department of Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, HSE and Department of Health on this issue, as well as working closely with their universities to explore further options for training placements.

STUDENT PLACEMENT ACTIVITY BY HOSPITAL GROUP

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN/ IRELAND EAST HOSPITAL GROUP

In UCD and across the Ireland East Hospital Group a placements group was established, to comprise of all relevant tutors, placement coordinators and the CAO to discuss possible solutions to the on-going problems. Information was collected on numbers of placements filled and areas of on-going concern from the relevant schools and the possibility of using the CityWest space for breakout for student teaching and patient contact for rehab purposes was investigated. IEHG have also agreed to fund two simulation leads across the group who feed into the Doctor Training leads on the simulation needs for the hospitals. These new simulation posts will ensure that simulation training needs are appropriately met for staff and students.

RCSI/ RCSI HOSPITALS

At the start of the pandemic site meetings were held with all clinical sites where RCSI students were placed to provide assurances and advise sites of the steps RCSI were undertaking to comply with COVID-19 recommendations. All sites provided RCSI with lists of wards and OPD clinics and RCSI designed an app for students to use where they could log their daily interactions on clinical sites. This app also includes details of team attachments. A COVID-Admin Control Team was set up in RCSI to coordinate the testing of students, the communication between sites if outbreaks occurred and ensuring daily log completion.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK/ SSW HOSPITAL GROUP

Excellent communication with the HSE and CCO outlined the HSE requirements expected of students on clinical placement during the pandemic. These requirements were translated into a process for ensuring compliance among students and the development of a bespoke app to monitor and ensure that students with COVID-19 symptoms did not present at hospital sites for placement. The IT solution was coupled with live monitoring of the app by the UCC student health team and real time contact with symptomatic students or those who otherwise represented an infection risk. To date this robust system has ensured the safety of students, staff, patients and clients in the health care system and had underpinned the continuity of student placement and the integrity of the pipeline of HCW graduates for the HSE in UCC/SSW Hospital Group. Communication regarding clinical placement for the Therapies has been ongoing. This group were particularly badly affected by the redeployment of HSE clinical training staff to COVID related support activities. The CCO has been very supportive in encouraging staff to resume placement provision. Schools in the College of Medicine and Health developed COVID-19 specific training modules and courses for students, staff and HCWs. The College also established an openly accessible COVID-19 resource centre (accessed 17,000 times) which includes as a one stop shop for COVID-19 related evidence and training/refresher videos for front line workers.

STUDENT PLACEMENT ACTIVITY BY HOSPITAL GROUP

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, GALWAY/ SAOLTA UNIVERSITY HEALTH CARE GROUP

All final year medical exams were rescheduled and completed prior to the closure of NUIG in April 2020. September 2020 saw a return of final year medical students to the hospital and this was facilitated through the cooperation of academic and clinical staff. The September 2020 cohort of students were able to receive clinical exposure, supported by simulation based education to ensure their training continued throughout the pandemic.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH IRELAND

Despite the significant challenges to student placement posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, student placements at CHI continued satisfactorily and with minimal disruption. Consistent and positive collaboration with the Chief Clinical Officer played a fundamental role in this achievement. A decision was made that all medical students should wear a uniform of "scrubs" which identified the University to which they belonged. This had IPC advantages and brought the medical students in line with nursing and HSCP students. Clinical attachments were modified in consultation with the site IPC lead, to make them as safe as possible. For example, students were attached to a single team for the duration of their clinical attachment in most cases. An innovative inter-professional student-led clinic was set up at CHI Connolly, attended by students of all medical schools and Nursing students at various stages from DCU. This has proved to be a great success and it will continue and hopefully be expanded in time.

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK/UL HOSPITALS GROUP

Working closely with the Office of the HSE's Chief Clinical Officer and partner clinical sites, the UL School of Medicine developed specific COVID19 training modules. Bespoke processes for auditing student compliance, processes for monitoring HCW risk assessments and testing where indicated, were introduced. Pathways were also developed to ensure relevant information was provided to clinical sites in the case of a COVID-19 positive student. Examinations, where appropriate, were delivered in an online, timebound proctored setting. To offset the difficulties posed with running large scale face to face clinical examinations during a global pandemic, alternative assessments were introduced to ensure a robust assessment of clinical skills. Details of 2020 assessment programmes were then submitted to the Medical Council Education & Training Committee.

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN/ DUBLIN MIDLANDS HOSPITAL GROUP

Trinity successfully administered complex examinations such as Anatomy exams using virtual presence technology online for the first time in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. They also rescheduled the final year medical exams scheduled for spring 2020. Students were informed of this change to exams at the earliest point possible and, with the cooperation and help of Clinical Academic Colleagues and partner teaching hospitals, a modified Clinical exam was conducted on 12th April.

AREAS OF FOCUS FOR 2021

- Continuing to highlight the need for an Academic Health Science System in Irish healthcare – demonstrating international best practice on integrating teaching, research and innovation in healthcare.
- Building further contacts and networks with the Community Health Organisations linked to the hospital groups to explore further areas of collaboration.
- Completing a successful co-PI application to the HRB for a National COVID-19 Biobank with progress to start on establishing the biobank beginning in early 2021.
- Continuing oversight of the National Simulation Strategy being led by Professor Dara Byrne in NUIG/Saolta with the strategy due to be submitted to the NDTP in June 2021.
- Pursue further simulation training funding going into the latter half of 2021 to ensure staff and students have training facilities available to them.
- Ensuring undergraduate student placements and postgraduate training remains a key topic at the weekly CAO meetings, with continuous follow-up with Universities and government bodies to highlight this on-going issue. As well as continuing to seek unique solutions at university/hospital group level.
- Working to further represent all healthcare professionals working in our hospital groups to ensure they have a means of communicating issues directly to the CAOs to progress further.

Created by UCD Health Affairs on behalf of the CAO Group



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