



Saolta Preceptor Awards

The Saolta Preceptor Recognition Awards was an initiative to illustrate the value and gratitude deserved by the preceptors in the clinical areas who have supported, preceptored, mentored and assessed the candidates throughout the adaptation and assessment programme. To date, since January 2022 over 550 new overseas nurses and midwives have commenced employment in one of our six hospitals.

The programme has been extremely positive with over 97% of candidates successfully completing the adaptation and assessment programme. The success of the programme is largely due to the support and input of each of the preceptors and clinical nurse managers on the ground in the clinical areas. To celebrate the achievement, an awards ceremony was held on each site. The ceremonies were greatly received with a wonderful atmospheres on the day. The winning preceptor /mentor was presented with a voucher, a certificate for themselves and their award by their Director and Chief Director of Nursing and Midwifery. Examples of kindness, compassion and support from the preceptors to the new nurses and midwives was overwhelming.

Perceptorship/mentorship is a great way to accelerate performance and productivity. Not just that, mentorship comes with the benefits of gaining different perspectives, improving self-confidence, and increases job satisfaction.

Staff who completed the adaptation and assessment programme felt more knowledgeable and confident.

Juben P. Baldeviso, ED nurse at UHG praised the preceptor programme and said, "I started my adaptation program with a nervous heart yet with an open mind. My preceptor Therese Prendergast made me feel so much more. She made me feel welcome and that I belonged to the unit. She is very enthusiastic when it comes to work and keeps you involved in the process. I can say she is very skilled with her practice which is backed up by years of experience here and abroad. She has a lot of energy. I am humbled to be taught by her, she is compassionate in dealing with patients and I have witnessed it personally every time I am with her. She will always walk the extra mile to deliver the best possible nursing care to her patients."

Shyona Shelly, D Ward at MUH said, "I was provided with the perfect blend of education, supervision and support. With my preceptors support I felt empowered to step outside of my comfort zone and was able to grow in my work with patients. I had an amazing role model and the type of care provider I aspire to be."

Zakitu Zakari, Midwife, Maternity Services at PUH expressed her gratitude and said, "My preceptor understood me and made time to teach and guide me. She stood up for me and always made me feel welcome. I would nominate her every day because she is the best. She educated me on the do's and don'ts, I was so eager to go to work with her. There is no one who does the job better."

Saolta Tweets



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Chief Executive Officer Saolta Group



Tony Canavan, CEO

Dear colleagues

Last Summer I provided you with an update on the reforms taking place in the HSE with the establishment of the Regional Health Areas and their geographical locations. Work has been ongoing nationally since then to progress the new RHA structures. The RHAs will be geographically aligned and will be responsible for both acute hospital services and community services. The new structures are currently being finalised, and the coming months will see the appointment of six new regional Heads of the RHAs. I will keep you updated as the reforms progress over the coming year.

You may aware the Mr. Bernard Gloster has been appointed as the new CEO of the HSE. I wish Bernard well in his new role. I would also like to take this opportunity to advise you that Mr. Maurice Power, CFO will shortly leave the Saolta Group to take up a new national role in the RHAs as National Lead. We all look forward to working closely with Maurice in this key role.

Tony Canavan
Chief Executive Officer

Chief Operations Officer Saolta Group



Ann Cosgrove, COO

Dear colleagues

We have just passed the third anniversary of COVID-19 reaching our shores and changing the way in which we deliver healthcare entirely.

I want to start by acknowledging the amazing commitment of all of our staff throughout the last number of years working through a pandemic. I would ask you to take time to think about your contribution to this amazing national effort in meeting the needs of patient care throughout COVID and to acknowledge the work of your team members, those in your hospital and across the hospital group.

As we move forward our focus has shifted to increasing access for our patients. This requires a whole hospital and whole group approach to provide the greatest access to care possible (In-patient procedures, Day case, GI scopes and Outpatient appointments) for the remainder of the year.

Ann Cosgrove
Chief Operations Officer

COVID-19 – Three years on



Click [here](#) to view video message from Saolta Group's CEO, Chief Clinical Director, and Chief Operations Officer in recognition of the dedication and commitment of staff throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Update from the Saolta Project Management Office

Saolta PMO began 2023 by co-hosting the launch of the experiential programme 'Delivering Change Together' in January in Sligo. This programme was developed collaboratively with the PMOs in CHW and CH CDLMS with the support of the National Organisation Development, Change and Innovation team.

Participating on the day were over 150 multidisciplinary healthcare colleagues from across the West and North West regions.



From left: Pauline Burke, Project Manager, Saolta PMO; Tony Canavan, CEO Saolta; Helen O'Neill, Project Manager, Saolta PMO; Siobhan Rodgers, Support Officer, Saolta PMO.



Back row from left: Irene Maguire, Saolta; Marie O'Haire, National; Ann Marie Keane, CH CDLMS; Ellie Cooley, CHW.
Front row from left: Bernie Austin, CHW; Helen Bevan, Guest Speaker; Helen O'Neill, Saolta.

Helen Bevan, renowned Healthcare Change and Service Improvement Leader, Strategic Advisor, NHS England was guest speaker and led panel discussions on the day.

The panel included Tony Canavan, CEO Saolta; Breda Crehan-Roche, Chief Officer CHW; Dermot Monaghan, Chief Officer, CH CDLMS; and Liam Woods, National Director transition to Regional Health Associations (RHA's).

Nine Communities of Practice were setup on the day, with representatives from across the three organisations and across all aspects of the Service.

The PMOs are currently developing additional training to address the Project Management and Change Management needs identified by Communities of Practice participants and will provide continued support and guidance to enable greater collaboration at a local level.

Congratulations to Gráinne Cawley, Programme Manager, Saolta, who has recently been appointed General Manager of the Medicine MCAN. We wish Gráinne the very best in her new role.

Members of the Saolta PMO team receiving their Saolta Recognition Medals for their contribution during COVID-19 pandemic.



From left: Pauline Burke; Jo Shortt; Gráinne Cawley; and Irene Maguire.

Saolta Integrated Governance Project (SIGP)

Site and MCAN Role clarity workshop with Hospital Managers and Site DONs and MCAN Teams completed on 03 February. Work is ongoing in applying Learnings to upcoming Phase 2 of the project which will involve roll out of Medicine and Perioperative MCANs in the first instance.

Enhanced Community Care

A Joint Saolta/ CHW webinar was held on 07 February with engagement from staff across Saolta, CHW and GPs. Over 470 people joined the webinar—access to webinar is available through the link—<https://youtu.be/LPDk6tCWlac>

Women's and Children's Managed Clinical and Academic Network (MCAN)

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Saolta Newsletter where I would like to share with you some of the ongoing work and project updates from the Women and Children's MCAN. We have had a very busy start to the year already and have a lot to look forward to. The Saolta Group hosted its Neonatology Study Day in Galway which was very well attended and welcomed both local and national speakers to enhance and strengthen the provision of neonatal care.

Saolta Paediatric Bedside Assessment Booklet

Background: The role of the CNM3 Quality Improvement Paediatrics is to promote and support the provision of evidence-based quality standards within Children's Services across the Saolta Group. One key aspect of this quality assurance process is to provide objective validation of the Quality Care Metrics in Children's Services which are performed on a monthly basis. This is achieved by engaging in a biannual peer audit process in Paediatric Wards across the five Saolta sites. Peer audits provide an opportunity to objectively measure trends within QCM, highlight areas of excellent care provision and identify risks or gaps in care delivery.

Quality Improvement Initiative: In collaboration with nursing staff working within Children's Services across the five Saolta sites, the Saolta Paediatric Bedside Assessment Booklet was created to support staff to address gaps in audit findings and improve standards in practice. This 8-page booklet incorporates five age-specific Paediatric nursing assessment tools including the national Paediatric Early Warning System (PEWS) chart with Sepsis prompts, Pain assessment tools with instructions for use, modified Neurological assessment tool, PVC and CVC Care Bundles with VIP Score and a Neurovascular assessment tool.

Each tool is supported with an appropriate guideline or protocol which will be available for all Saolta staff on the Q Pulse platform in March 2023. A one-day educational implementation event will take place on each site during March and April 2023 to prepare staff to use the booklets and provide the tools necessary for nurse educators to continue the implementation process on their site. Official launch of the booklet will take place across Saolta sites in April 2023.

Benefits: Following the launch of this booklet, the most commonly used age-appropriate assessment tools contained in one booklet format at the patient's bedside will enhance consistent use of these tools by staff and enable a standardized approach to evidence-based patient care across the five Saolta sites which will positively impact service users. Biannual peer QCM audits will continue and we expect to see measurable improvements in QCM results where gaps were initially identified, thus closing the loop in the provision of excellent care standards in this regard. In addition, having a shared standard across all sites promotes shared learning and communication which is already showing benefits for staff in terms of improved engagement and shared problem solving.

Neonatology Study Day 2023

The Saolta University Health Care Group held its 8th Saolta Neonatal Study Day on Thursday, February 23, 2023 in the Clayton Hotel, Galway. There were over 100 delegates who attended the conference from the Saolta Hospital Group itself and some travelling from other hospitals outside Saolta. The conference had excellent speakers: a combination of local, national and international speakers. The speakers covered a wide variety of neonatal topics and generated a lot of excellent questions and discussion. The study day also had a number of skill stations which were organised and facilitated by the neonatal team members. These provided a great opportunity for delegates to update existing skill sets or to look at bringing a new skill back to their relevant neonatal units, to enhance and strengthen the provision of neonatal care.

The study day was an excellent forum for the neonatal multidisciplinary team to meet each other again, face-to-face after the COVID-19 pandemic, to share good clinical practice, to update on evidence based practice and acquire new skills. The study day event was organised by the neonatal team in UHG, with huge thanks particularly to the Neonatal advanced nurse practitioners Ms Jean James and Ms Áine Binchy. The Neonatal Study Day was an absolute success from which everybody gained something. The event was excellent from an educational perspective, but it also allowed the neonatal community to link back together and strengthen the communication pathways going forward.

Dr Hilary Stokes, Saolta Director of Paediatrics attended the day and said "The Neonatal conference showcased a great standard of specialised presentations and a day of real educational value. It was a great networking opportunity and really good to see cross discipline engagement and attendance from across the country, well done to all involved in organising it."

Plans are already underway to get the 9th Saolta Neonatal Study Day organised and hopefully it will be as successful as this one.



From left, Jean James, Registered Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Neonatology; Dr Johannes Letshwiti, Consultant Neonatologist and Neonatal Lead; Dr Ethel Ryan, Consultant Neonatologist and Paediatrician, UHG and Dr Donough O Donovan, Consultant Neonatologist and Paediatrician, UHG.

Cancer

Managed Clinical and Academic Network (MCAN)

February 04 2023 marked World Cancer Day as the many professionals across the Saolta Group continued in their dedicated roles to provide the best possible care for our patients and their families living with Cancer.

To mark the day GUH Director of Nursing Marie Burns and Cancer MCAN Director of Nursing, Olive Gallagher gathered members of the nursing team to acknowledge the outreach service recently established in Merlin Park Hospital. The recently appointed CNM 3 Systemic Anti-cancer Treatment Outreach (SACT) co-ordinator Sheila Talbot together with the Merlin Park infusion unit nurses and the haematology oncology day ward team have set up an outreach programme to facilitate patients on supportive treatments for cancer in MPUH.

The National Cancer Control Programme SACT Model of Care (2022) recognised the need to develop ways in which Cancer treatment is delivered.

One of the recommendations within the SACT Model of care was the development of SACT Outreach services. Sheilas' role will streamline the care of cancer patients and develop outreach facilities. The first step in the SACT outreach service is the Merlin Park unit, which provides low-risk treatments for a pre-agreed group of patients, the benefit on treatment times in the Haematology Oncology day ward as a result are already evident.

The Rapid Access Lung Cancer team gathered to reinstate the RAL quarterly meeting in February 2023, creating the opportunity to share learning and review the delivery of the lung cancer programme and map out the future direction of the programme. Present were Dr David Breen, Lead Consultant; Mr Alan Soo; and Ronan Kelly, Consultant Thoracic Surgeons; Dr Silvie Blazkova, Consultant Medical Oncologist; Dr Ronan McDermott, Consultant Radiation Oncologist; Imelda Fleming, ANP RAL; Janet Clinice, CNS RAL Marie Walsh, CNS Medical Oncology; Cora Hallinan, Clinic Co-ordinator; Nainsi Corcoran, Lung Cancer Patient Navigator and Hanna Walter, Data Manager.



The Rapid Access Lung Cancer team.

Helen O'Reilly OECl co-ordinator gave a presentation to the meeting on the OECl process and received support from the Multidisciplinary team. Helen will be engaging with the MDT over the next number of weeks to advance the lung cancer pathways as part of the OECl process.

In the prostate service Rachael Dalton, Advanced Nurse Practitioner (Prostate cancer and survivorship) and Leanne McPhilbin, Patient Navigator Prostate are leading out on the stratified self-managed follow up project for prostate patients. This personalised approach to delivering care will allow post-operative prostate cancer patients to be monitored remotely by their urology multi-disciplinary team. Regular PSA blood tests and written assessments will be provided by the patient and reviewed by the healthcare team reducing the number of in person follow up visits required post operatively.

In February members of the National Adolescents and young Adults Steering group visited University Hospital Galway to meet with the local AYA implementation group. Niamh O'Sullivan, ADON CAYA Programme CHI at Crumlin and Ruth McMenamin, National AYA Programme lead attended our local meeting with Dr Peter McCarthy, Consultant Haematologist CHI at Crumlin joining virtually.

This very interactive meeting involving Cancer MCAN members, hospital site and nursing management, consultant haematologists and medical oncology consultant. This provided the opportunity to explore how we might further progress Galway as an AYA Cancer centre into the future. Niamh and Ruth also had the opportunity to visit the clinical areas whilst in Galway meeting the many wonderful staff caring for patients in this group.

Dr Niamh Keane, Consultant Haematologist will lead out on the AYA programme here in Galway. A Clinical Nurse Specialist in AYA Nursing will be appointed in the near future.



Members of the National Adolescents and Young Adults Steering group.

Cancer Seminar Series:

Since September 2022 the Cancer Seminar series has taken place. Hosted by Dr Michael McCarthy, Consultant Medical Oncologist and co-ordinated by Emer Hennessy Cancer Centre Research Manager. The seminars take place on the first working Monday of each month from 1-2pm. This is an open event for all clinicians, academics, nurses, health professionals, researchers, students and trainees to attend. It is envisaged that this will promote sharing of knowledge and research collaboration between clinical and academic environments. It is a hybrid event, onsite in the Clinical Science Institute and online for staff in Saolta Hospitals and medical academics across the region. CPD credits have been approved for HSE staff. This series has proved very popular with over 180 attendees so far online or in person.

To date in 2023 the following presentations were made;

January: Dr Aideen Ryan, Associate Professor in Tumour Immunology presented Stromal cells as immunotherapeutic targets in colorectal cancer.

February: Dr Patrick J. Murphy, Network Manager, HRB Primary Care Clinical Trials Network Ireland and Dr Janice Richmond, Advanced Nurse Practitioner Letterkenny University Hospital. This session discussed the:

"Development and Pilot of an Integrated Care Model for the Management of patients receiving Oral Anti-Cancer Medications (OAMs) by an Advanced Nurse Practitioner."

March: Professor Aoife Lowery, Associate Professor of Surgery, University of Galway, Consultant Breast Surgeon, Irish Cancer Society Clinician Research Leader presented an excellent lecture on Cancer Survivorship: "Exploring ways to reduce treatment burden."



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



Saolta Cancer MCAN Seminar Series



PROF AOIFE LOWERY

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF SURGERY, UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY
CONSULTANT BREAST SURGEON, UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL GALWAY
IRISH CANCER SOCIETY, CLINICIAN RESEARCH LEADER

Cancer Survivorship: Exploring ways to reduce treatment burden

Organisation of European Cancer Institutions (OEI) Accreditation Programme

On 08 March 2023, Mr Tony Canavan chaired the first Saolta OEI Steering Group meeting as the Saolta Cancer Programme embarks on a self-assessment and quality improvement programme across the Saolta region. Professor Michael Kerin, Director, Saolta Cancer MCAN gave a very informative presentation outlining the benefits of OEI accreditation for patients within Saolta involving the integration of Clinical Care, Research and Education. Mr Peter Doran, Director of Clinical Trials institute, University of Galway outlined the clinical trials and research opportunities the OEI programme will bring to the region in the years ahead.

It is envisaged that over the next 12-18 months, the cancer programme will undertake a comprehensive self-assessment, experience an external peer review and develop a quality improvement plan for the delivery of cancer care across Saolta.

Academic Office



International and national experts joined over 75 medical consultants for Train the Trainer event hosted by Saolta and University of Galway.

On 27 January the Academic Office of the Saolta Group organised a Train the Trainer event to support the ongoing education and professional development of our medical staff. Consultants play a very important role in training medical interns and we were delighted to welcome over 75 consultants from across the region to this event.

The meeting provided updates on intern training, clinical teaching and training and managing key challenges for trainees and trainers including giving feedback, recognising a struggling trainee, and considering standards and diversity in the training environment.

Saolta is the only hospital group to undertake this type of training within their group and it reflects a commitment to support and enable trainers locally. It reflects a commitment to support our trainers, and as much as possible devolve training events such as this to the group rather than rely on Dublin based programme in the training bodies. This was a group wide event that focused on the critical role of consultant trainer – those who are responsible for training the trainee who will be consultants of the future.

The Academic office also coordinated the delivery of mandatory training courses from specific training bodies, RCPI and RCSI, to take place on the morning of this event. We would like to thank the RCPI and RCSI and acknowledge their support.

The event heard from a number of expert speakers who covered a wide range of issues. These included Prof Subha Ramani, MBBS, MPH, MMed, PhD, FAMEE, President of AMEE, General Internal Medicine/ Director, Program for Research, Innovations and Scholarship, Dept of Medicine/ Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, USA; Dr Natasha Slattery, Clinical Fellow, Mid-West Intern Network, University Hospital Limerick; Dr Gozie Offiah, Senior Lecturer and Director of Curriculum at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Clinical Lead for the National Intern Training programme in the HSE; Hadas Levy, Health and Wellbeing Manager, Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI) and Aisling Smith, Education Manager, Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI).

Over 75 consultants attended with more than 55 completing mandatory training for trainers – a critical skill to support our trainees and also a requirement to host trainees and to achieve medical council and training body accreditation.

Letterkenny ED launches Physician Associates Placement Programme

Sinéad Regan and Shannen Price are two final year RCSI Physician Associate (PA) students who are currently completing their placement in the Emergency Department at Letterkenny University Hospital. This placement marks a significant milestone for both the hospital and the students as they are the first PA students to be placed in the Saolta University Health Care Group.

PAs are healthcare professionals who work alongside doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals in a variety of settings. They are trained in the medical model, and their training includes both classroom instruction and clinical experience. They work under the supervision of a consultant and are responsible for a range of medical tasks such as taking medical histories, performing physical examinations, diagnosing and treating illnesses, and analysing test results.

Letterkenny University Hospital's acceptance of these students on placement is commendable and innovative as it demonstrates the hospital's recognition of the crucial role that PAs can play in Ireland's healthcare system. The emergency department is an area where time is of the essence, and the presence of PAs can make a significant difference to patient care. PAs can assist doctors in managing the flow of patients, thereby allowing them to focus on the most severely ill patients.

PAs are also trained to perform a range of medical procedures, such as suturing wounds and inserting catheters, which can reduce wait times for patients and improve the department's overall efficiency.

Letterkenny University Hospital is committed to delivering high-quality patient care, and the introduction of PAs is one way of achieving this goal. By accepting Sinéad and Shannen on placement and supporting their development, the hospital is demonstrating their commitment to investing in new and innovative healthcare roles that have the potential to benefit both patients and healthcare professionals.

Overall, the presence of PAs in the emergency department is a valuable addition to the healthcare system, as it not only benefits patients but also helps to alleviate the workload of doctors and nurses, improving their work-life balance and job satisfaction.

Letterkenny University Hospital's acceptance of these students on placement is a positive step towards recognizing the potential of PAs in the healthcare system and contributing to the development of this new profession in Ireland.

Annual Clinical Workshop



The Medical Academy hosted their Annual Clinical Workshop in January at Sligo University Hospital.

Presentations were made on a range of themes which focussed on learning, education and patient pathways between Acute and Primary Care.

€40,500 presented to UHG



From left front row: Bernie Moran; Edel Kelly, Assistant Directive of Nursing; John Kenny; Isabelle Kenny; Gillian Shanahan, Organ Donation Nurse Manager; Emma Gunning; Yvonne Shaw, Clinical Nurse Manager 2, ICU; Angela Burke O'Brien, Clinical Nurse Manager 2, ICU.

From left back row: Pauline May, Assistant Director of Nursing /Former Organ Donation Nurse Manager; Pat Kenny; Dr John Bates, Consultant Intensivist; Ann Sheehan, Clinical Facilitator; Orla Kelly, Critical Care Nurse.

A very generous donation of €40,500 was recently presented to the Intensive Care Unit and the Patient Comfort Fund at UHG in memory of the late Mary Kenny from Loughrea, Co Galway. For more click [here](#).

Older Persons Services Awareness Week at PUH

To coincide with World Delirium Awareness Day on 15 March, the Frailty Front Door team at PUH hosted Older Persons Services awareness week for staff to highlight some of the services available in the community for older people.

Frailty at the Front Door is a multidisciplinary service available in the Emergency Department. The aim of the service is to identify and support older people who may be pre-frail or frail and may have difficulty completing everyday tasks. The team consists of a Clinical Nurse Specialist, Senior Occupational Therapist, Senior Physiotherapist, Therapy Assistant, and clerical officer.

Lisa O'Looney, Senior Physiotherapist said, "We hosted a number of events over four days to coincide with World Delirium Awareness Day, including grand rounds, falls prevention, balance tests, grip tests, and a staff quiz. We were delighted to have representatives from the ICPOP team, Living Well, Alone, Age Action, Alzheimer's Ireland and Memory Technology Resource Room. Older Persons week highlighted the many services available in the community to assist and support Older People living well at home."



New Intensive Care Unit Extension at SUH

Sligo University Hospital has opened a new 290 square metre extension to the Intensive Care Unit. The extension consists of a single storey building adjacent to the existing Intensive Care Unit (comprising four ensuite isolation rooms with associated facilities in addition, the existing ICU is being renovated as part of the project and works to date have included upgrade works to the existing isolation rooms in line with current regulations and additional ancillary facilities to include a staff base and utility rooms.

The new extension is accessible from the existing ICU on level 8, with its own central nursing station. It will be supported by additional staff comprising nurses, Medical, Health and Social Care Professionals and other staff grades.

A key priority of the National Clinical Programme for Critical Care focuses on capacity building. This development sees the hospital increasing its critical care capacity from 6 to 8 beds, as well as having more single room facilities within the Intensive Care Unit. This will also allow the hospital to provide different levels of critical care such as ICU level 3 care and HDU level 2 care within the setting. Click [here](#) for more.



From left: Bernie Lindsay, Health Care Assistant; Denise McCameron, Staff Nurse; Kate Dolan; Clinical Nurse Manager 2; Mary McDonald, Clinical Nurse Manager 2; Ciara Lee, Staff Nurse and Anna Giraldez Consultant Anaesthetist.



First 'Incisionless' surgery in Ireland performed at GUH

Galway University Hospitals has become the first hospital in Ireland to introduce an 'incisionless' minimally invasive surgery to help correct blockages of the oesophagus. Achalasia is a rare condition which causes a blockage in the muscles of the lower oesophagus causing dysphagia or difficulty in swallowing, including in pronounced cases, liquids.

The procedure was carried out by Mr Paul Carroll, Consultant Oesophagogastric and General Surgeon, specialising in minimally invasive surgery and endoscopic surgery for oesophago-gastric cancer and benign disease.

Traditionally, treatment of Achalasia involves procedures to repeatedly dilate/open the oesophagus or, alternatively, requires laparoscopic surgery. The traditional surgery divides the muscles of the lower oesophagus through several small incisions in the abdomen.

However, surgeons in GUH have now undertaken an incisionless procedure using Peroral Endoscopic Myotomy (POEM). POEM uses an endoscope, a narrow flexible tube with a camera, to breach the lining of the oesophagus. The endoscope is inserted through the mouth and can be positioned into the space between the oesophageal lining and the muscles, allowing it to divide these muscles internally. The breach is then closed with special clips.

One of the significant benefits of this procedure is the ability to treat a subtype of achalasia with chest pain. This requires a longer division of the muscles along the length of the oesophagus, which is traditionally challenging to treat with standard surgery.



From Left, Máire Cooper, Theatre Staff Nurse; Noreen Keelan, Senior Anaesthetic Staff Nurse; Paul Carroll, Consultant Oesophagogastric and General Surgeon; Ashitosh Waidande, CNM 2, GI Theatre; and Deirdre Hoade, Senior Staff Nurse, Theatre.

POEM can also be used as a rescue or second line intervention where other treatments have failed. Patients are discharged the following morning without pain and with resolution of symptoms.

The introduction of this procedure has added to the expanding Minimally Invasive Upper GI programme in Galway and the Saolta University Health Care Group, which also provides endoscopic surgical interventions for early oesophageal and gastric cancers. GUH is one of only two centres in Ireland with this capability.

Click [here](#) for more.

Dermot Flanagan and friends donation of €55,000 to MUH

Mayo University Hospital received a donation €55,000 which was fundraised by Dermot Flanagan, team mates and friends for cancer services in the hospital.

Dermot is a former Mayo captain and GAA all star, member of the 1989, 1996 and 1997 senior football teams, and proud Ballaghaderreen native. He was motivated to undertake the fundraiser after undergoing treatment for non-Hodgkins lymphoma (a type of blood cancer) a number of years ago.

The fundraising event took place over eight days in August 2021, Dermot cycled to every GAA club in county Mayo starting at his home club in Ballaghaderreen and finishing in Louisburgh.

Speaking about the cycle Dermot said, "I received such a warm welcome in every club I visited and was overwhelmed with the engagement and support from the Mayo public. I want to thank every person who donated and sent messages of support. The amount raised far exceeded my expectations and is a testament to the generosity and community spirit of the people of Mayo."

Click [here](#) for more.



Dermot Flanagan joined by GAA team mates and friends presents a cheque for €55,000 to Mayo University Hospital for cancer services in the hospital. Dermot undertook a cycle to every GAA club in the county.

First of it's kind, nurse led oral anti-cancer medication trial is delivering care in the community in Donegal

An oncology research project led by Advanced Nurse Practitioner Dr Janice Richmond in Letterkenny University Hospital is delivering practical benefits for patients receiving oral anti-cancer medication in Donegal.

ANPs are the highest level of clinical experts in the nursing profession in Ireland today. Dr Richmond qualified as the first accredited Advanced Nurse Practitioner in Oncology in Ireland in 2006 and was recently awarded Senior Researcher of the Year by the Irish Cancer Society for her work on this project.

The core aim of the research project was to develop and investigate the potential transition of care of patients receiving oral anti-cancer medications from the hospital to community settings. The potential for this had long been talked about by the staff of the Oncology Day Ward who believed that there was a more appropriate way of caring for these patients.

A part of this work in its initial stages was to obtain and analyse stakeholder's (patients, clinicians and policy experts) perceptions of this possible transition. In line with the Sláintecare model of "*right care, right time, right place*" the ANP integrated care model successfully trialled by Dr Richmond and the wider team is improving the patients' experience of receiving treatment with these medications to make the process as efficient and convenient as possible. Another consequence of this is that it frees up hospital capacity in the Oncology Day Ward for patients who need to attend to receive acute therapies. Overall, the model has huge potential for national implementation.



From left: Mary Grace Kelly, Janice Richmond, and Alison Johnstone from the Oncology Research Team in LUH.



The pilot of reviewing patients receiving oral anti-cancer medications in a community setting commenced in January 2022. The team analysed the safety and efficacy of this new model of care and also investigated it's acceptability to staff and patients. 37 patients were enrolled on the trial and they had their assessments for oral anti-cancer therapy in a community setting either in person or virtually.

Throughout the 4-month pilot, 152 patient assessments were carried out by Dr Richmond, usually in Scally Place, which was set up to mirror a primary health care setting. The benefit to patients is shorter waiting times, ease of access and continuity of care while the hospital benefits from additional capacity added back to the Oncology Day Unit.

The acceptability of this new model was investigated by 3 anonymous questions to 31 health care staff (nurses, doctors, pharmacists and managers) and there was a high level of satisfaction noted.

Speaking about the potential of the trial Dr Richmond said, "Transitioning to a community-based OAM model would be a radical change for oncology in the Irish healthcare system; however, the COVID-19 pandemic forced swift changes in the management of OAM, and stakeholders believed these changes were positive and could be cultivated further.

"The feedback we received from patients throughout this study was very clear; patients expressed overwhelmingly positive experience of the new model of care. It was viewed as being holistic, comprehensive, organised and uninterrupted. With an integrated approach and with support and access to the wider hospital-based Multi-Disciplinary Team there is huge scope for this model to be implemented in other regions providing a similar positive experience for patients."

Click [here](#) for more.

GUH carries out first Robotic Guided Coronary Intervention in Ireland and the UK



From left: Dr Simone Fezzi, Prof Faisal Sharif and Dr Max Wagener.

Galway University Hospitals carried out the first Robotic Guided Coronary Intervention in Ireland and the UK.

The innovative procedure combines the benefits of coronary intervention with the precision of robotics, offering a range of benefits to patients.

The new technology is used in stent procedures to relieve blockages in the arteries of the heart. It allows for greater precision in positioning stents, allowing the Interventional Cardiologists to move the stent a millimetre at a time.

It also allows the medical team to have an enhanced, close up view of the angiographic images and information during the entire procedure.

The new technology allows Interventional Cardiologists to use the robot as an extension of their own hand, allowing for robotic precision and details visualization when positioning of guide catheters, guidewires and balloon/stent catheters. Prof Faisal Sharif, Consultant Cardiologist, who carried out the first procedure in UHG welcomed the addition of the CorPath Robotic Angioplasty as a game changer.

"Robotic innovation has come a long way in the last decade. And we in Galway are delighted to have performed the first Robotic Guided Coronary Intervention in Ireland and the UK." "The main advantage of robotics is that it is safe and very precise in stent placement. It allows the accurate placement for up to 1mm at a time," he said.

The use of robotics in the procedure will also benefit staff, reducing their exposure to radiation.

"Traditionally, the coronary stent placement procedure is performed in the Cardiac Cath Lab resulting in staff exposure to radiation. The second main advantage of using Robotics is the reduction in radiation exposure for the staff."

"We recently successfully completed the first case and going forward we will be performing these procedures regularly. I would like to thank Science Foundation Ireland, University of Galway and University Hospital Galway for their support towards this innovation," added Prof Sharif.

Chris Kane, General Manager of Galway University Hospitals welcomed the introduction of the new technology adding that it will further benefit patients.

"Innovations such as this are transforming medicine and will have a significant impact on the future care for patients. This state-of-the-art robotics will enhance patient care for our patients across the West and Northwest of Ireland," she added.

Please see video link for more information:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_uoMV1qsr0

UHG and University of Galway welcomed Renowned Cardiothoracic Surgeon, Professor Freddie Wood

Together with the University of Galway School of Medicine, Galway University Hospitals was delighted to welcome Professor Freddie Wood to the Clinical Science Institute and hospital in March where he delivered a lecture on the subject of professionalism to undergraduate medical students, clinicians and healthcare staff. The lecture was attended by in excess of 250 people. He also toured the new cardiothoracic ward.

Professor Wood is a renowned cardiothoracic surgeon who, along with the late Mr Maurice Neligan, performed the first heart transplant in Ireland in 1985 and Irelands first single lung transplant in 2005 and subsequent double lung transplant in 2006. He set up Irelands artificial heart programme and first tissue valve bank. Following his retirement from clinical practice, Professor Wood took on the role of President of the Irish Medical Council.



From left: Dr Yvonne Smyth, Consultant Cardiologist, GUH; Mr Alan Soo, Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon, GUH; Professor Freddie Wood, Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon and Former President of the Irish Medical Council; Mr Fabio Bartolozzi, Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon, GUH; Dr Lorraine McGrath-Soo, Lecturer in Medical Education and Academic Co-Ordinator, Department of Acute Medicine, University of Galway. **Missing from Picture:** Mr Ronan Kelly, Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon, GUH.

MUH launched Hospital Watch Programme

An Garda Síochána and Mayo University Hospital launched Hospital Watch, a proactive crime prevention programme in hospital settings.

Similar to the residential Neighbourhood Watch scheme, Hospital Watch operates as a partnership between An Garda Síochána Mayo, the Health Service Executive, Saolta University Health Care Group, MUH staff, patients and visitors with the aim of preventing crime within the hospital setting. The initiative embodies the principles of partnership, problem solving, engagement and crime prevention.



Nursing Staff from RUH present at RCSI International Conference

Nursing staff from Roscommon Injury Unit were delighted to have the opportunity to present posters and oral presentations at the recent RCSI Annual International Nursing and Midwifery Research and Education Conference.

RANPs Nadia Finneran and Dona Cromar presented their research on the 'National Early Warning Score: a qualitative exploration of nurses' views and experience of using a clinical decision-making tool in practice' and 'Descriptive qualitative study discovering ED nurses and doctors' experiences and perceptions of the rapid assessment and treatment service'.

Patricia Larkin, RANP presented her poster discussing a 'Retrospective cohort study examining how traumatic wounds are managed in the injury unit, as well as the development of a comprehensive wound assessment tool that includes clinical photography and cANP Sarah Daly outlined in her poster presentation how 'Discharge care bundles reduce readmission rates for exacerbating COPD patients'.



Nursing staff from Roscommon Injury Unit.

PUH launches 'Little Journey' app for children



From left: Elizabeth Fitzgerald, Theatre Staff Nurse; Breda Brady, Clinical Skills Facilitator, Paediatric Unit; 6 year old Diarmuid Fallon from Oran, County Roscommon and Dr Vinod Sudhir, Consultant Anaesthesiologist.

Portiuncula University Hospital recently launched the 'Little Journey' virtual reality app to help children between the ages of 3 and 12, to prepare for surgery and allay their anxiety in advance of their hospital stay.

The 'Little Journey' app provides 360 degree views of all the areas the children will visit at the hospital as well as useful information about anaesthesiology tailored to the age of the child.

Dr Vinod Sudhir, Consultant Anaesthesiologist at Portiuncula University Hospital said, "Preoperative anxiety in children and parents is a very real phenomenon before undergoing general anaesthesia. As healthcare professionals we recognise the increasing impact of anxiety and the physiological negative impact it can have on the child's and parent's ability to cope with events surrounding the experience of anaesthesiology and surgery.

"Children may have anxiety around the multidisciplinary environment of theatre, their expectation of events, meeting unfamiliar people and even fear of pain. Parents/guardians can accompany their young children to theatre and be present with them during induction of anaesthesia. Some of the parent's anxiety comes from their fear of the unknown and the steps surrounding their role with their child at the time their child undergoes anaesthesia.

By providing information through the app, which uses child-friendly animation, we can begin to prepare parents/guardians and children for surgery and ease their distress. "The 'Little Journey' app was developed to help change the way children experience hospitals by empowering them and giving them the information they need to reduce their anxiety in a fun, interactive format. The app helps children to familiarise themselves with the hospital and the handy checklists included will help families to prepare in advance of the hospital stay.

"Last year the demand for general anaesthetic increased in children due to the increase of paediatric day case surgery at the hospital. We want to help alleviate any distress due to anxiety whether the child is presenting for surgery or investigative procedures."

Martina Fallon, Mum to Diarmuid said, "The app was so helpful for my son Diarmuid. He could visualise his hospital experience through the app and it really helped not only him but me to prepare. He loved the different characters and games and played the games all the way in the car to the hospital. It is also a great information tool for parents; we loved it, it's a great resource."

Click [here](#) for more.

An Taoiseach visits to PUH

On Friday 24 February, An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar visited Portlincula University Hospital and was provided with an overview of services provided by the hospital, including direct GP access to radiology and cardiac diagnostics in the community, current capital construction works including the 50 bed replacement ward block and the 12 bed isolation ward.

Future capital requirements were also discussed, in particular additional capacity in the Emergency Department, upgrade of the Hospital Sterile Supplies Services and relocation of the Pharmacy Department.

An Taoiseach had an opportunity to visit service users within a ward area and also the Radiology Department which houses the new replacement CT scanner. Radiology colleagues provided An Taoiseach with an update in relation to the waiting list and the positive impact the new replacement CT has made for service users in the hospital.

The visit was concluded with a visit to the Emergency Department where An Taoiseach had an opportunity to meet with front line staff.



New PALS at LUH



Angela Mc Closkey was recently appointed to the role of Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Coordinator at Letterkenny University Hospital. Angela is from Letterkenny and spent 19 years working as a Radiographer in Letterkenny University Hospital prior to her appointment as PALS Coordinator.

Speaking about her appointment Angela said; "Within the hospital every contact we have with a patient can have a lasting impact and I try and make that contact as positive as possible. My role involves ensuring that the patient voice is heard either through the patient directly or through a nominated representative.

Click [here](#) for more.

TESCO Community Fund donation to RUH



From left: Ursula Morgan, Director of Nursing, RUH; John Cleary, Tesco; Deirdre O'Reilly, Cardiac Rehabilitation Coordinator, RUH and Siobhán Kilcline, Tesco.

The Tesco Community Fund recently donated €624 to the to the Cardiac Rehabilitation Department at Roscommon University Hospital.

Cardiac Rehabilitation Coordinator Deirdre O'Reilly said, "On behalf of the Cardiac Rehabilitation Team and Hospital management, I would like to express a heartfelt thank you to the Tesco Community Fund for this very kind donation. The funds will be used to purchase equipment for the department in order to improve the patients' experience and rehabilitation journey.

Workplace Excellence Awards



Winners for Excellence in Recruitment, Retention and Recognition at the recent Workplace Excellence Awards. From left: Paul Hooton, CDNM, Saolta; Maura Mannion, ADON, UHG; Ann Sheehan, Clinical Skills Facilitator, ICU, UHG; Margaret Coen, Clinical Skills Facilitator, SUH; Carly Smith, ADON, Saolta; Emer Duffy, Clinical Skills Facilitator, LUH; Fiona Butler, Clinical Skills Facilitator, Maternity, PUH; Marie Corbett, ADON, Saolta; Caroline Hession, Clinical Midwife Manager III, PUH; and Colette Murray, Group Recruitment and Retention Manager, Saolta.

#OurPeople

Name: Carly Smyth

Job Title: Assistant Director of Nursing

Location: Portiuncula University Hospital

How did you get interested in the role of Nurse Practice Development Coordinator?

I remember being a student nurse and attending a session with a clinical educator. I knew then that's what I wanted to do. My whole career I have worked towards education, from teaching and precepting to working as a clinical skills facilitator. I completed a masters in clinical education and always knew I wanted to go on and manage the practice development team.

What is a typical day?

Currently I have two roles; I am working as the Saolta Practice Development Coordinator and the Assistant Director of Nursing for Practice Development, Paediatrics and Occupational Health in Portiuncula University Hospital. I am so privileged because my work is so varied and exciting and no two days are the same.

With my Saolta Group position I lead on the adaptation and Assessment programme. This requires I travel to each hospital to support the candidate nurses and midwives, provide education and support and manage the clinical skills facilitators who support the programme. I have been overseas to India, the Philippines and Dubai to recruit in the last year and feel very blessed to have recruited such wonderful and skilled staff.

For my other half of the job I manage the day to day running and development of the paediatric department. I work with such dynamic, hardworking and caring nurses every day. The role of Practice Development Coordinator allows me to create and strategically develop the nursing service through education, quality initiatives and change management projects. My role also oversees undergraduate nurse education for students who are on clinical placement in Portiuncula.

If you had to describe your job in three words... or one sentence... what would it be?

A dynamic, quality driven and fulfilling job which allows me to impact and improve patient care through education.

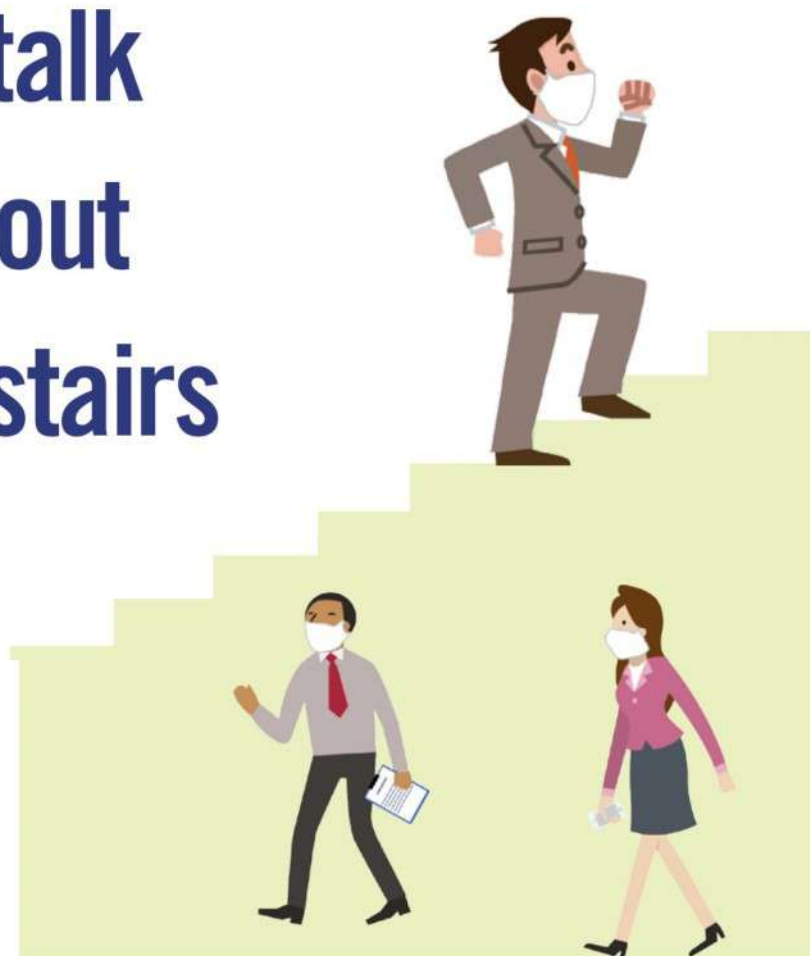
What is the most rewarding part of your job?

Without any doubt I work with such wonderful people in both aspects of my job, it makes everyday a joy, I feel very lucky to love what I do so much.



Take steps to better health at work

- Walk to talk
- Move about
- Use the stairs
- Sit less



Steps to Health

hse.ie/stepschallenge





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