

14 January 2019

Dear Chairman,

The New Children's Hospital Alliance (NCHA), a constituent member of the umbrella group Connolly 4 Kids Hospital (C4KH) presents this submission for consideration at the Health Committee meeting with NPHDB/CHGB/St James's Hospital/HSE/DoH,DPER , 16th January 2019 regarding concerns around the escalating costs of the New Children's Hospital (NCH) at St James's(SJH).

Forever A Second Rate Hospital

The Taoiseach says "It may turn out to be one of the most expensive children's' hospitals in the world but it is also going to turn out to be one of the best".

We say - most expensive - yes; one of the best – never.

It is self-evident that this hospital can never be more than a Second Rate Hospital, let alone one of the best in the world, for the reasons we have already presented on many occasions and in many fora. In a submission endorsed by three, named, eminent emeritus paediatric professors from RCSI, UCD, and Trinity College we, as members of the Connolly for Kids Hospital group presented these facts to the Health Committee in September 2016. We invite you to review that submission, our opening statement and our repost to the arguments of both the NPHDB and the Minister which can be found on the Home Page of the website connollyforkidshospital.com.

The following brief, and occasionally satirical, comments give a flavour of the hospital's problems that earn it the caption "Second Rate".

- **Maternity:** Dream on. Not co-locatable with the NCH. SJH site is too congested, too expensive. A continuing nightmare. Too sick to survive ambulance transfer - don't look in that baby's eyes -you might get too upset . Anybody care?
- **Beds:** There are not enough beds. So no space for adolescents. Anyway they are too challenging to have in a paediatric hospital. Anybody care?
- **Operating theatres:** There are not enough operating theatres – 28 needed, not 18. The surgeons should play more golf. Anybody care?
- **Parking:** 2000, not 1000, is the minimum requirement. Underground at SJH –sure it only costs €44,000 per space. Peanuts. Anybody care?
- **Family Accommodation Unit:** The Ronald McDonald charity had wanted to offer 60 family rooms but only 53 can be squeezed in. Double that number -120- are needed with capacity to further expand if required. Sure, hotels are cheap in Dublin. Anybody care?
- **Helipad:** Not enough space for a ground helipad. Major Trauma Centre? Dream on. Just don't die in transit please - it spoils the statistics.
- **Research Centre:** Too small, too far from the hospital. Research-intensive hospital? Play golf instead. Anybody care?
- **Hot-desking:** Privacy, patient and family dignity? Oh- what are they? Anybody care?

- **Expansion space:** The Site Capacity Plan presented to ABP instead of a site Master Plan would open your eyes - wide! Let's fight the Adult hospital for the money and space to expand. Sure it's only Taxpayers' money. Might help to chat up the CEO. Anybody care?
- **Access:** St James's is the most difficult hospital in the country for ambulances to get to according to the experts - ambulance drivers. Yarra, what do they know? Who'd listen to them?
- **Staffing Problems:** Lack of parking provision and expensive housing will lead to serious staffing problems. Really? Sure nurses should stop having babies and walk to work from Kildare. If they really need to use a staff crèche suggest that they go to work in Tallaght where they've just got a spanking new one (decanting money, you know - no problem, it's sloshing around). Had to knock down the 'old' one to make room for the NCH Satellite unit, you know how it is. Expect kisses too from the adult hospital for the donation of the current children's wards and Emergency Department.
- **Satellite Centres at Connolly and Tallaght:** Just don't get sick at night- we ain't open. No, no, we do have longer opening hours than the banks – we don't lock our front doors until 8pm. By the way, sorry but no ambulance patients accepted. I know, I know, but they will bring you in to James's. Getting home ? Sorry again – but that's your problem.

A bigger picture

The claim by government that the building of this second rate hospital for children warrants the now revealed huge cost is delusional. It is an unacceptable abuse of public money.

There has been a series of three National Paediatric Development Boards involved in the SJH project –that chaired by Mr. Harry Crosbie until Dec 2012, the second appointed by Minister Reilly in Jan 2013, consisting of four DoH civil servants and two HSE officials and in Sept 2013 the current Board (the Building board) and the creation of the Children's Hospital Group Board (the Client board) were appointed. NCHA received the NPHDB minutes for 2012-2014 under FOI. Most of the 2013 work involved plans for the major reconfiguration of the James campus and the servicing of the Adult hospital. It appears a hugely significant cost has been generated by remodelling. The Model of Care for the children was only completed in July 2015.

This cost problem is no longer only about children's facilities but is set to affect nearly every family in the country. The out-of-control building costs of a new children's hospital cannot justify the deferral of badly-needed health services, recently listed in national media, such as country-wide primary care centres, residential facilities for older people, diagnostic equipment and beds for people currently on trolleys in Emergency Departments or awaiting 'elective' admission. This isn't a Luas, this isn't a Metro, this isn't a Port Tunnel, this is citizens' health, affecting people of all ages all over the country. NCHA does not support that money for these various projects be diverted to the children's hospital.

The cabinet's decision last month to approve the continuation of the project before analysis of the problem was precipitate and wrong.

This project must be at least be paused until an analysis is done and sense prevails.

What is it that politicians cannot understand? Though unacceptable, children are not dying because of the antiquated conditions of some of the current children's hospital buildings . As the Dolphin Report(p42) states regarding Programme Delivery "while any avoidable delay should be minimised, it is more important to choose the right site which meets essential criteria over the long-term (say 50 – 100 years) than one which is merely the fastest in the short-term. This approach has been endorsed by patients, parents, and health professionals who met us."

For those parents, paediatricians, paediatric surgeons, anaesthetists, intensivists, even Crumlin Hospital's Board of Directors, who have fought so hard for primary co-location, not with an adult but with a maternity hospital, the nail in the coffin for the St. James's site has to be the revealing comment by Professor Chris Fitzpatrick, previous Master/CEO of the Coombe Women and Children's University Hospital, in a recent opinion article in a national newspaper. Echoing what so many have been saying for so long, he writes " With neither money nor space, plans for a tri-located maternity hospital [at St.James,] are now a pie-in-the-sky fantasy".

Neither Money nor Space

We finish with a submission to An Bord Pleanála, [PA 0043] , September 2015, signed by fifteen medical consultants from The Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery and the Department of Cardiology, Our Lady's Children's Hospital Crumlin and The Joint Department of Paediatric Intensive Care Medicine, Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin and The Children's University Hospital, Temple Street:

To the Secretary,

"We, whose daily practice involves caring for critically ill neonates, unreservedly support the need for a single, national children's hospital, and are willing to compromise on many fronts to achieve this goal, acknowledging that no site is ideal.

Co-location with a physically linked maternity hospital is, in our expert opinion, non-negotiable. We are unwilling to endorse a national children's hospital on a site that cannot accommodate this truly critical adjacency. To do so would be to fail those infants whom we are entrusted to protect. To proceed with such a project will result in the avoidable death or disability of many new-born babies for years to come.

It is our earnest wish that the proposal for the St. James's site can deliver such a co-location. If, however, this is not the case, we urge the Board to have the courage and integrity to act accordingly".

The New Children's Hospital Alliance now redirects this letter to the Taoiseach and the Minister for Health. While it was outwith the brief of the ABP to consider it, it is the duty of our politicians to do so. The government is pre-eminently "entrusted to protect" these children from "avoidable death or disability"

In the heartfelt words of the professionals that signed the Bord Pleanála submission, NCHA urges the Taoiseach and Minister "to have the courage and integrity to act accordingly".

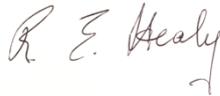
We respectfully request that the Health Committee makes this recommendation to the Minister for Health and the government.

We are sure St. James's adult hospital would in the future make good use of the entire site – taxpayers' money spent to date need not be wasted.

Signed



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