

Partners and Institutional Members

IRELAND

Department of Health and Children

Ireland's Department of Health was established in 1947, under the Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Act of 1946. Before 1947, the public health services were the responsibility of the Department of Local Government and Public Health, and continued to be administered by local authorities until 1970. The Health Act, 1970, which established eight health boards and abolished the Hospitals Commission, increased the Department's direct involvement in the execution of health policy. The emphasis on the curative and regulatory aspects of the health services, and on the need to develop the acute hospital sector in particular, remained one of the defining characteristics of health policy in the decade following the passing of the Act. The period from 1970 to the mid-1980s was marked by a consistent development of services in accordance with the policy commitments in the 1966 white paper *The Health Services and Their Further Development*.

The publication of the health strategy *Shaping a Healthier Future*, in 1994, was the culmination of a reappraisal of the health services that had commenced in 1986 with the discussion document *Health: The Wider Dimensions*. *Shaping a Healthier Future* signaled a significant change in direction, with its emphasis on the achievement and measurement of health gain and social gain and its commitment to organise and manage the system as an integrated whole.

A new health strategy for the next seven to ten years, *Quality and Fairness*, was launched in 2001. The new strategy is based on the principles of equity, people-centredness, quality, and accountability. Key elements include the largest expansion in hospital bed capacity in the health service's history; a new Treatment Purchase Fund to buy treatment for public patients waiting more than three months from initial referral; the addition of more day care places, respite care places, and residential capacity for people with disabilities; development of an Action Plan on Age; a statutory complaints procedures; and establishment of a new National Hospitals Agency and an independent Health Information and Quality Authority.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety was established by the Departments (NI) Order 1999. The Department has three main business responsibilities:

- Health and Personal Social Services, which includes policy and legislation for hospitals, family practitioner services and community health and personal social services;
- Public Health, which covers policy, legislation and administrative action to promote and protect the health and well being of the population; and
- Public Safety, which includes responsibility for the policy and legislation for the Fire and Ambulance Services.

The Department's mission is to improve everyone's health and social well being. It does so by ensuring the provision of appropriate health and social care services, both in clinical settings, such as hospitals and GPs' surgeries, and in the community, through nursing, social work and other professional services. It also supports programmes of health promotion and education to encourage the community to adopt activities, behaviours and attitudes that will lead to better health and well being.

Since 2000, the Government has produced a written contract with the people of Northern Ireland setting out, within the limits of the financial resources available, the plans and priorities for tackling problems and improving public services. The latest document, known as *Priorities and Budget 2004-06*, sets the context for the Department's 2004-06 planning documents.

The Department's Public Service Agreement sets out the Department's overall aim, its objectives, key targets, associated actions and budget allocations, cross-referring these to the originating *Priorities and Budget* commitments; and links funding to the achievement of agreed outputs and outcomes.

The Corporate Plan sets out the high level aims and objectives for the Department and details how the Department will achieve key outcomes, including:

- Reduction in preventable deaths, diseases and injuries
- More responsive hospital services
- An accessible and effective primary care service
- Improvements in the quality of health and social care provided

The Priorities for Action (PfA) document sets out planning goals for the Health and Personal Social Services for 2004-05. The document takes the outcomes and targets contained in *Priorities and Budget 2004-06* and translates them into a clear and challenging agenda for the HPSS.

Health and Wellbeing Investment Plans (HWIP) set out the arrangements by which the four HSS Boards secure effective health and social services for their local populations, improve health and social well being and reduce inequalities.

The Investing for Health Strategy launched in March 2002 set out how the health and well being of all the people can be improved, and in particular how the unacceptable inequalities in health can be reduced. The Strategy was developed by all Government Departments through the Ministerial Group on Public Health (MGPH), chaired by the Minister for DHSSPS, reflecting the important role that all Departments and their agencies have in improving the state of people's health.

The administration of the Department is advised

by a number of professional groups. The Medical and Nursing Groups are represented on the Consortium. The Health Minister for Northern Ireland is Angela Smith.

UNITED STATES

National Cancer Institute

Department of Health and Human Services

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which is an agency of the Public Health Service (PHS) in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). NCI was established under the National Cancer Act of 1937 and is responsible for overseeing all US government-sponsored cancer research through two key programmes: an intramural programme that encompasses the work of more than 400 principal investigators working in NCI's own clinics and laboratories and an extramural programme that encompasses thousands of investigators at more than 50 cancer centres nationwide that receive funding for clinical research through NCI.

Dr Andrew von Eschenbach is the Director of the National Cancer Institute. Tommy Thompson is the Secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services.

OTHER MAJOR PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

Ireland's Health Research Board

In conjunction with Northern Ireland's Research and Development Office, Ireland's Health Research Board is responsible for funding many Consortium programmes, including the clinical trials network and scholar exchange programmes. John Boland, Ireland's Minister of Health, established the Health Research Board in 1986. Its main functions are to promote, assist, commission, or conduct medical, epidemiological, health, and health services research.

Northern Ireland's Research and Development Office

Northern Ireland's Research and Development Office provides overall direction for Health and Personal Social Services research and development and liaises with national statutory bodies and health-related organisations. The office supports a wide range of research and development initiatives, from education and training to direct commissioning. The Research and Development Office promotes, coordinates, and supports research and development within the field of health and social care. Its mandate is to encompass the research needs of all sectors of health and social care within Northern Ireland.