

# Partners and Institutional Members

## IRELAND

### Department of Health and Children

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

Reappraisal of health services, which commenced in 1986 with the discussion document *Health: The Wider Dimensions*, culminated in the 1994 publication of the health strategy *Shaping a Healthier Future*. This strategy signaled a significant change in direction, with its emphasis on the achievement and measurement of both health and social gains and its commitment to organise and manage the system as an integrated whole.

In 2001, Quality and Fairness — a new health strategy for the next seven to ten years — was launched. Based on the principles of equity, people-centredness, quality, and accountability, the strategy's 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/respite care facilities and residential capacity for people with disabilities; development of an Action Plan on Age; statutory complaints procedures; and a new National Hospitals Agency; and an independent Health Information and Quality Authority.

Under legislation passed in December 2004, the Health Service Executive was established and given statutory responsibility for the delivery of the entire range of health and personal social services previously delivered by the regional health boards and authority. This reorganisation will provide uniformity and consistency of policy implementation and service delivery across the entire country improving access and quality. Under the Corporate Bodies Act, the Interim Health Information and Quality Authority has been set up to drive the health information and quality and safety agenda from a national perspective. This initiative will be consolidated in 2005 by way of primary legislation to put the Authority on a statutory footing. Finally, the Department of Health and Children itself will undergo a major reorganisation later this year to take account of its new role in the reformed

health system. These major reform initiatives have been designed to modernise our health service to provide the level and quality of care consistent with our state of economic and social development.

## **NORTHERN IRELAND**

### **Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety**

Established by the Departments (NI) Order 1999, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) is charged with three main business responsibilities:

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

Several professional groups serve as advisors to the administration of the Department. The Medical and Nursing Groups have representatives in the Consortium membership. The current Health Minister for Northern Ireland is Angela Smith.

The Department's mission is to improve the health and social well being of all people in Northern Ireland by ensuring appropriate health and social care services in clinical settings, such as hospitals and GPs' surgeries, and in the community through nursing, social work and other professional services.

DHSSPS also supports health promotion and education programmes to encourage the community to adopt activities, behaviours and attitudes that will lead to better health and well being.

For the past five years, the Government of Northern Ireland has produced a written contract with its people, mapping out plans and priorities for addressing problems and improving public services within the limits of the available financial resources. The Priorities and Budget 2004-06 set the context for the Department's 2004-06 planning documents.

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

The Corporate Plan delineates the Department's high level aims and objectives, detailing how the Department will achieve key outcomes, including:

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

Planning goals for the 2004-05 Health and Personal Social Services (HPSS) were set out in the Priorities for Action (PfA) document. Outcomes and targets contained in the Priorities and Budget 2004-06 were translated into a clear and challenging agenda for the HPSS.

The four HPSS Boards secure effective health and social services for their local populations, improve health and social well being, and reduce inequalities, by using arrangements spelled out in Health and Wellbeing Investment Plans.

The 2002 Investing for Health Strategy created a plan for the improvement of the health and well being of all people, and for reduction of unacceptable inequalities in health care. This collaborative Strategy reflects the importance of all Departments and their agencies in improving the state of people's health.

## 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 U.S. government-sponsored cancer research. This portfolio includes two key programmes: an intramural programme that includes the work of more than 400 principal investigators working in NCI's own clinics and

laboratories; and an extramural programme that includes 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. During 2004, Mr Tommy Thompson served as the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services.

## OTHER MAJOR PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

### Health Research Board

#### *Ireland*

In conjunction with Northern Ireland's Research and Development Office, Ireland's Health Research Board (HRB) is responsible for funding many Consortium programmes, including the clinical trials network and scholar exchange programmes. John Boland, Ireland's former Minister of Health, established the Health Research Board in 1986. The Health Research Board's mission is to improve health through research and information. It believes that research and information improve health, combat disease, reduce disability and enhance the quality and equity of healthcare in Ireland. Health research also has a major contribution to make to the growth of a knowledge-based economy in Ireland, as it is the key to development of new and more effective ways of diagnosing and treating disease. Through its support for health research, the HRB is contributing to strengthening research capacity on the island of Ireland. The HRB works closely with partners in Ireland, the UK, Europe and the U.S. to achieve its goals.

## Research and Development Office

### *Northern Ireland*

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