



## Dear Colleagues

Welcome to the spring edition of Connect.

The Hospital experienced a very busy start to the year with a 30% increase in overall activity in January. We also witnessed an unprecedented growth in presentations to the ED which put exceptional pressure on our entire system.

In positive news which should directly impact you, we have managed to eliminate waiting lists for community x-rays in the new radiography unit at Tallaght Cross West which is open to GP referrals and staffed by our radiology team. We have also detailed below some great news for the furtherment of service provision in our community

As you might be aware work is progressing across the country, to fully establish six new Regional Health Authorities (RHA). These new authorities will combine and replace the existing Hospital Groups and Community Health Organisations. Under the new national structure, we in TUH will become part of the new Dublin & Midlands Area and look forward to a closer relationship with people like yourselves who work in the community as we become part of the same wider structure.

The Hospital recently hosted a very successful visit from Kate Killeen White, the recently appointed Executive Officer for the new Dublin & Midlands Regional Health Authority (RHA).

During her time at the Hospital, Ms Killeen White met with members of staff in the Reeves Day Surgery Centre, William Stokes Unit and the ED, along with members of the Executive Management Team. The warm welcome and caring atmosphere was noted by Ms Killeen White at the end of her visit.

Finally, I would like let you know we have welcomed Professor Anne-Marie Brady who has just taken over as the Chair of the TUH Board. She brings a wealth of experience to the role as the current Chair of Nursing & Chronic Illness in the School of Nursing & Midwifery at Trinity College Dublin. Her research has focused on the provision of person centred, supportive care and strategies to meet healthcare demands around chronic illness / cancer survivorship. Her knowledge and earlier frontline experience as a nurse will be very beneficial to the Hospital.

Best wishes

**Lucy Nugent**  
CEO



CEO of TUH Lucy Nugent and the new Chair of the TUH Board Professor Anne-Marie Brady

## Stronger for Surgery

**The Hospital has just produced and launched a series of short videos with key advice for patients scheduled to have surgery. Malnutrition, frailty and cigarette smoking are all risk factors for poor outcomes after surgery.**

The materials have been developed as a way to educate and empower patients to reduce these very changeable risk factors, focussing on the most important ways patients can help themselves.

These are:

- ▶ Introduction to the series and the importance of preparing for surgery
- ▶ Eating well
- ▶ Being more active

- ▶ Managing feelings about surgery
- ▶ Stopping smoking

Waiting for surgery can be a stressful time for patients, having access to these materials clearly outlines things they can do, turning waiting time into preparation time, and giving patients better results during and after surgery.

The materials will be accessible from the Department of Surgery page on the Hospital website, and the Hospital's YouTube channel and with QR codes included in letters to patients about their scheduled surgery.

Funding for the initiative was made available via the HSE Spark Ignite Program which is supported by the National Quality Improvement Team, the Nursing & Midwifery Services Director and the National Health & Social Care Professions Office.



Members of the Stronger for Surgery project team led by Siobhán Power from left to right: Joanne Coffey, TUH Communications Manager; Dr. Valerie Twomey, Head of Psychology; Siobhán Power, Clinical Specialist Dietitian for Perioperative Services; Ms Maria Whelan, Consultant General & Colorectal Surgeon; Laura Hammond, Senior Physiotherapist; Dr. Natalie Cole, Head of Innovate Health. Absent from picture Úna Delahunty, Health Promotion & Improvement Officer

## Major Investment

**The Tallaght University Hospital Foundation (TUHF) has announced a ground breaking €7.6 million investment which will mean we will have a new state-of-the-art Aging Well Centre open in Clondalkin village.**

This aligns with the Hospital's vision for improved services and infrastructure, extending beyond our walls and underscores TUHF's dedication to making that happen. The new centre will focus on brain health, bone health, falls and frailty.

Thanks to the partnership with TUHF and Bartra Healthcare, TUH will be able to provide a community-based centre where older people from Clondalkin will be able to access clinical and social care closer to their homes and families in a truly holistic environment. It is fully aligned with the objectives of the Hospital's five-year strategic plan and Sláintecare, with the convent having been identified as the ideal location due to its central position within Clondalkin.

Professor Seán Kennelly, Consultant Physician in Geriatric & Stroke Medicine, emphasised that "The clinical expertise required to deliver the service will be based in a series of state-of-the-art gerontological care outpatient suites and an exercise/ rehabilitation gym area under the governance of the TUH Department of Age-Related Health, staffed by hospital staff."

The Centre will also have a social hub comprising a volunteer cafe and an activities centre for music, art, and social gatherings. A community-based aging well centre will greatly help with early patient assessment, support hospital avoidance, and reduce the risk of patients presenting to the ED for crisis management. The aim is to shift from an unplanned care approach to a person-centred, planned and coordinated approach.



*Pictured at the unveiling were Angela Ring, CEO Bartra Healthcare; Douglas Collins CEO, Tallaght University Hospital Foundation (TUHF); Professor Seán Kennelly; Consultant Geriatrician TUH; Lucy Nugent, CEO Tallaght University Hospital (TUH); Ian Fennell, Head of Construction, Bartra; Kelly Crowley, Head of Development TUHF with Sr. Frances Crowe and Sr. Anne Nevin.*

## Celebrating International Endometriosis Awareness

The National Women's & Infants Health Programme are in the process of developing a new National Framework for Endometriosis Care, supported by National Clinical Guidance and a Quick Reference Guide. As part of this NWHIP programme, TUH will be one of two national supra-regional specialist tertiary referral centres for complex Endometriosis cases in the east of Ireland. Funding has been received to support a multi-disciplinary specialist team.

The Team comprises of two consultant Gynaecologists with an interest in Endometriosis care, a dedicated Colorectal Surgeon, Endometriosis Nurse Specialists, Physiotherapists, a Dietitian, Pain management, Radiologist and Sonographer specialists, with a psychologist joining the team soon.

The Nursing Team at TUH are the interface of the team, providing patients with direct access to support in navigating their care journey, educating, providing telephone consultations and triaging of care, while co-ordinating Multidisciplinary Team Meetings.

Under the guidance of Dr. Aoife O'Neill and Dr. Alison DeMaio (Consultant Gynaecologists) the delivery of Advanced Endometriosis Care & Women's Health is paramount to our patients. Strategic planning is ongoing for future service developments.

Endometriosis is a chronic condition where small pieces of tissue similar to the endometrium are found outside of the womb within the abdomen and pelvis – WHO. When this tissue breaks down it can cause inflammation, pain and scar tissue formation.

Despite being a common chronic disorder diagnosis can be a challenge. It is a long-term condition that can have a significant impact both physically and emotionally on the patient's quality of life.

The European Society of Human Reproduction & Embryology recommends that clinicians should consider the diagnosis of endometriosis in individuals presenting with the following cyclical and non-cyclical signs and symptoms: dysmenorrhea, deep dyspareunia, dysuria, dyschezia, painful rectal bleeding or haematuria, shoulder tip pain, catamenial pneumothorax, cyclical cough/ haemoptysis/chest pain, cyclical scar swelling and pain, fatigue and infertility.

Awareness in the primary care setting is paramount to increasing the efficiency of treating women with Endometriosis. A chronic Care Model of management will apply from primary care, accessing secondary care and then appropriately streamlined to tertiary referral, where appropriate.

- ▶ If you think endometriosis, initiate medical treatment and screening with ultrasound is important.
- ▶ If first-line treatment with hormonal therapy is not tolerated or improving symptoms, make the appropriate referral to a gynaecologist for further tests.
- ▶ Upon discussion with the gynaecology team the role of laparoscopy is discussed. If the findings and histology of a laparoscopy show bowel, bladder, uterus or extra pelvic endometriosis, known as deep endometriosis, a referral is then required to a supra-regional tertiary centre.

Aligned with the Sláintecare principle, the aim is to build integrated endometriosis care pathways, working together in the management of this complex condition. This will enable a greater outreach and access to patients requiring much needed Specialist management of their condition. The Endometriosis Team in TUH strive to raise awareness, educate and network with our colleagues in the community.

The feedback from the women's health task force was pivotal in transforming the future of Endometriosis care provided in Ireland. Women did not feel listened to regarding their endometriosis within our health system.

## Upcoming Health Lectures

Don't miss two important upcoming health lectures due to take place in Tallaght in the coming weeks organised by the Academic Primary Care Collaborative.

The first lecture on **Positive Aging** will happen in the Russell Building in Tallaght Cross West on April 11th. The free talk (which will also be available to join online) will be delivered by Geriatrician and TCD Professor Rose Anne Kenny and will run from 2pm – 3pm.

Meanwhile, on June 20th next Assistant Professor in Dietetics at TCD Annemarie Bennett will give a talk on **Healthy Eating across the Lifespan**. This event which will again happen in the Russell Building in Tallaght takes place from 2pm - 3pm. In-person, tickets for both these talks can be reserved on Eventbrite.

This lecture series is co-hosted by Trinity College Dublin and An Cosán. These public events bring the academic staff of Trinity College, as well as their research partners, to the local community in Tallaght. The events are open to everyone to attend, with limited numbers for on-site attendance but unlimited access online via Zoom.



*Pictured above from left to right; Geriatrician & TCD Professor Rose Anne Kenny; Assistant Professor in Dietetics at TCD Annemarie Bennett*

## New Consultants

Some of the new staff members to join the Consultant team at the Hospital.

Name	Discipline
Dr. Mariel Campion	Consultant General Adult Psychiatrist, Liaison Psychiatry
Dr. Habitha Mohammed Sulaiman	Consultant Cardiologist
Dr. Cliodhna Browne	Consultant Urologist
Dr. Darren Lillis	Consultant in Emergency Medicine



## ED Supports

Last year on a trial basis the hospital introduced Yvette Hudson and Mark Daly as two new Patient Liaison Officers in our Emergency Department (ED). The roles have now been made permanent with plans to develop and expand such positions in different parts of the Hospital.

Mark and Yvette make sure the patient's voice is heard either through the patient directly or via their partner or carer. They also try to resolve any issues they have, record any positive feedback, and make sure that patients waiting a long time have enough food and water.

The Patient Liaison Officers also ensure that patients in the waiting room understand the ED process i.e. triage/ phlebotomy/x-ray/wait times. Having Yvette and Mark in their roles enables the Nursing Staff more time to attend to patients and their clinical needs.

In the first full year of data, the number of compliments has doubled, and informal complaints have reduced by over 40%.

When we put ourselves in the patient's shoes, we appreciate that attending the ED can be a very stressful time for patients and their loved ones/carers. They are entering, by necessity rather than choice into an unfamiliar world with medical language which they are not used to at a time when they are unwell or have had an accident. It can also be a busy, noisy place where patients and their families can easily be overwhelmed.

Yvette and Mark will continue to work with ED staff and Senior Management to improve safety, quality, and care to our patients and provide a better experience within TUH in line with our CARE values (Collaborate, Achieve, Respect & Equity). The service runs from 8am- 8pm six days a week. Saturday is the one day the service does not run.



*Pictured from left to right Mark Daly and Yvette Hudson, our Patient Liaison Officers in the Emergency Department.*

First I would like to say thanks for the support from the whole team including the patient liaison who were very kind to provide us with information and guidance. I understand the health system is in a crisis moment, but the whole team was very educated, caring, and respectful of my loved one. I would also like to acknowledge the cleaning staff as well, I could see that even in an overcrowded situation, they can keep the areas spotless.

## New Cancer Surveillance Clinic

In January 2023, Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) in Urology Lynn Casey started a new ANP-led Non-Muscle Invasive Bladder Cancer (NMIBC) Surveillance Clinic at TUH. We were only the second Hospital in the country to provide this valuable service after the first such clinic was set up at Galway University Hospital.

Before this service opened Lynn was trained in carrying out a test called - flexible cystoscopy which she uses at this new Surveillance Clinic to evaluate patients for bladder cancer.

Many other hospitals are now in the process of replicating this clinic. As well as providing the best possible care in a timely fashion, the clinic frees up valuable Consultant clinic space to see new patients and decrease waiting lists. In the last year over 350 flexible cystoscopies have been carried out at TUH and over 250 doses of immunotherapy/ chemotherapy delivered, all in the correct timeframe.

As a result of COVID-19 and then the Cyber-attack, surveillance was postponed for patients with low-grade NMIBC due to the smaller risk of recurrence and therefore many of these patients had to be re-identified and redirected back onto timely surveillance. Early in 2023, the Cystoscopy waiting list was validated and by year-end 160 Patients with NMIBC that had surveillance delayed are now back on track, with 59 patients successfully discharged from the service.

Bladder cancer is the 10th most common cancer worldwide. It affects about 520 people in Ireland each year. More common in men than women, around one-quarter of Bladder Cancer cases, are muscle invasive, which require systemic chemotherapy and/or immunotherapy, radical treatment (cystectomy or radiotherapy), or palliation.

NMIBC is a chronic disease with high recurrence and progression rates with most patients requiring invasive treatment and burdensome surveillance schedules with frequent hospital visits.

Surveillance can last 10 or more years depending on the cancer stage and if recurrences occur. Treatment-related side effects may interrupt therapy and possibly result in its discontinuation. Patients' quality of life can be negatively affected at various stages of the cancer journey.

An ANP-led service for these patients provides holistic care throughout all stages of the patient's journey to get the best supportive care, information provision, and delivery of appropriate treatment and surveillance protocols in a timely fashion.



*Lynn Casey, Advanced Nurse Practitioner who runs the surveillance clinic*



If you would like any more information about any articles in the Connect or have suggestions for future editions please do get in touch  
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