

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of the Irish Blood Transfusion Service held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2011 at 12.30pm in the Barry Room, Munster Regional Transfusion Centre, St Finbarr's Hospital, Cork.**

**Present:** Ms. Katharine Bulbulia, Chairperson  
Mr. Sean Wyse  
Ms. Jane O'Brien  
Dr. Hilary O'Leary  
Mr. Mark Moran  
Ms. Ann Horan  
Dr. Paul Browne

**Via Audiolink:** Mr. David Lowe

**Apologies:** Ms. Sinead Ni Mhaille  
Dr. Paolo Rebullia  
Ms. Marie Keane  
Mr. David Keenan

**Also in attendance:** Mr. Andrew Kelly, Chief Executive  
Dr. Ian Franklin, Medical & Scientific Director  
Ms. Mirinda O'Donovan, Secretary to the Board

**1. Minutes of the meeting of the Board on 16<sup>th</sup> May**

The minutes of the meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> May were agreed subject to amendment.

**2. Matter arising**

*Therapeutic Apheresis Service*

The CE and the M&SD met Dr B White to discuss the provision of this service, however there has been no progress.

*World Blood Donor Day*

The Chairperson thanked all of the staff involved in the preparation and organisation of the event at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The Board also expressed thanks to those involved in the organisation of the crowd installation photograph of the blood drop, taken in the grounds of St Patrick's Cathedral to mark the occasion.

*Voluntary redundancy scheme*

The DOH&C have sought detailed additional information on the proposal for a voluntary redundancy scheme submitted by management to the DOH&C. The paper submitted by management is to be reviewed to see if it is possible at this stage to meet the DOH&C requirements.

*BECS*

The RtP has been published. The DOH&C has advised that a peer review group needs to be appointed and this will commence in the coming weeks.

## *NHO*

A draft SLA has been provided by the IMB regarding the transfer of the statutory reporting functions from the NHO to the IMB. An internal meeting is due to take place this week to review the draft and ensure that it puts the necessary safeguards in place to address IBTS concerns.

### **3. Chief Executive's Report**

#### *Blood supply*

There was a dip in attendance in May, but this did not impact on supply to hospitals. Additional measures were taken to increase attendance. The IBTS is now focusing on specific blood groups to tailor supply to meet demand. Texting is proving useful, however where sufficient supply in a particular blood group exists, donors are asked not to attend clinics and the response from donors to this approach has been mixed.

Demand for platelets has been very volatile this year, month on month decline in usage at the beginning of the year has been followed by significant increase in demand in May. There was also an increase in red cell usage in May following a decrease in previous months.

#### *Review of activities – drive for efficiencies and cost savings*

The four task groups reported to the EMT on 10<sup>th</sup> June and these proposals were discussed at length at a meeting of the EMT on 15<sup>th</sup> June.

The CE asked the Board if there were any particular areas of the business or activities that the Board felt should not be considered as part of the review. The Board confirmed that it was happy for the EMT to progress all of the options at this point. The CE confirmed that the proposals would be brought to the Board in July for its consideration and that there was additional work to be carried out on costings and scenario planning to support some of the measures being proposed, but that this would be completed in time for the July Board meeting.

It was agreed that a proposed timescale for progressing this process through the Board and its sub-committee structure would also be included in the July Board papers.

#### *Health & Safety*

There have been 3 reportable incidents to date this year.

#### *Discussions with unions*

Changes to the clinic in Cork will now be implemented on 29<sup>th</sup> August. The delay is due to the decision to move to nurse led only for the hybrid clinic has required a programme of training for the nurses concerned.

#### *Virology Contingency*

The consolidation of virology in the NBC is scheduled to take place on 1<sup>st</sup> December, however this date is dependent on the SNBTS being able to deliver the project, particularly the IT element at their end.

#### *Staffing issues*

### *BECS*

The RtP has been published, but there has been no progress with the DOH&C regarding its veto on this project.

### *New donors*

The Board noted a decline in the number of new donors attending clinics. The CE pointed out that recent activity to target only specific blood groups to match demand has meant that donations from regular donors vs new donors is altered compared to past patterns and that this is constantly monitored and marketing messages adjusted to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of new donors.

## **4. Medical & Scientific Director's Report**

### *MSMs*

The M&SD noted that the UK was likely to make an announcement regarding its deferral policy in July, with a proposed implementation date of September for the new policy. This is expected to be a one year deferral. The IBTS will continue to implement the current permanent deferral policy, until it is possible to examine the impact of the change in the UK. This position is also likely to be held by the USA, Canada and the Netherlands.

The CE and M&SD have met GLEN to discuss the matter. The EU has also commissioned some research on this area and this is expected to be completed in the autumn. It was noted that this was a particularly sensitive issue and that every effort would be made by the IBTS to explain its position in a way that did not cause offence.

### *Dr Lawlor's retirement*

The job specification with SJH has now been finalised. The IBTS has advertised for a locum, pending the successful filling of this vacancy. The NHO will report directly to the M&SD, to ensure continuity.

### *O negative usage*

Efforts by the IBTS to address the excessive O negative usage were initially successful but the usage has increased again.

### *Expert Group on Hepatitis C*

Ms O'Brien reported on the final meeting on the Expert Group on Hepatitis C and its final report to the Minister. Ms O'Brien noted that the RTU were now finalising its work and she expressed thanks on behalf of the expert group to Dr Lawlor and the staff of the RTU. The CMO at the DOH&C has agreed to propose to the Minister that this is the final report for the Expert Group – it will be the Minister's decision to publish this report.

The Board thanked Dr Lawlor for her years of service to the IBTS and the Chairperson thanked Ms J O'Brien for her work on the Expert Group.

## **5. Review of implementation of the Strategic Plan**

The CE gave a mid year presentation to the Board on the progress so far on the implementation of the Strategic Plan. It was noted that the all-Ireland Cord Bank in an alliance with the NIBTS was a particularly good initiative. The Board thanked the CE for his detailed and informative presentation.

## **6. Cork Centre**

The CE wrote to the HSE seeking HSE Board approval for the IBTS site at CUH. The proposal is to go to the Board of the HSE on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> June.

## **7. Financial Statements and Financial Update YTD**

The Finance Director made a presentation on the Financial Statement for 2010. Income from red cells was down by 11% this was made up of a 9% reduction in price and 2% on reduced usage. Income from the use of plasma was €1.2m – additional savings of 32% were achieved through a reduction in waste disposal. The transfer of crossmatch to MUH had an impact on testing income and staff costs. Overall there was a 3.2% reduction in FRCCs and a 7% reduction in platelets. 35% of overall costs are staff costs, 46% is processing, which includes components staff costs. In 2010 there was a 12.2% reduction in staff costs, a 17% reduction in the cost of blood packs and accessories and a 6% drop in the cost of drugs, dressings and reagents. There was also a 16.7% reduction in heat, light and power costs.

The management letter from the Comptroller and Auditor General was issued on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> June. The Chair of the Audit & Compliance Committee thanked the Finance Director and his team for their work on the audit and throughout the year. It was noted that at the meeting of the Committee with the C&AG, there were no issues and the C&AGs were very positive about the cooperation they had received during the audit.

The Board approved the financial statements for 2010. This was proposed by Mr M Moran and seconded by Ms J O'Brien.

The Financial Statements were signed by the Chairperson and Mr S Wyse. The Chairperson and Chief Executive signed the letter of representation.

The Finance Director also presented an update on the financial year to date. Results for the first 5 months shows a surplus. Income from FRCCs is lower than budgeted by 1.23% (170k) and income from platelets is higher than budgeted by .89% (72k).

## **8. Pension Scheme**

The CE has sought a meeting with the DOH&C but has not yet received a response. The Finance Committee is seeking its own independent actuarial advice on the pension scheme. The Unions have been advised that changes are necessary to the funding of the scheme and that the current actuarial evaluation of the scheme will form the basis for these discussions. The deficit in the scheme at the end of December 2010 was €24m. It was agreed by the Board that the Chairperson and the Chairs of the Finance and Audit & Compliance Committee have the Board approval to progress this matter on behalf of the Board.

## **9. MAC Minutes of 11<sup>th</sup> April 2011**

The minutes were taken as read. The upcoming retirement of Dr Lawlor and replacement arrangements were discussed. The future of the Therapeutic Apheresis Service was also discussed. The Chairperson of the MAC noted that the CE and the M&SD were reviewing the position on this service.

**10. Audit & Compliance Committee meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> March and 10<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

Minutes of the A&C Committee meeting were unavailable as they were to be amended. The minutes of the meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> May were taken as read. The Chair noted that the Committee had since met the C&AG on 7<sup>th</sup> June. It was also noted that the Committee had decided to defer a tender for IT Audit services until the New Year, when it will revisit the matter. The Committee will also hold a workshop in September with the relevant members of the EMT.

**11. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Board will take place on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July in the National Blood Centre at 12.30pm. The Chairperson also expressed thanks to Dr Power and her team for facilitating the meeting in the Cork Centre.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_