



Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation
Cumann Altraí agus Ban Cabhrach na hÉireann
Working Together

FACTSHEET COVID-19

updated Sunday 1st March 2020

The INMO are engaging on an on-going basis with the public health specialists and occupational health specialists of the HSE in respect of preparations and plans for dealing with suspected and confirmed cases of COVID 19. The INMO focus has been on ensuring the HSE and other health service employers provide clear and updated guidelines, as well as training, equipment and support for frontline staff.

Most of the issues we have raised to date have been met with a positive response: namely:

- Up to date and best practice guidelines for front line practitioners, which will be updated as the situation changes, **Agreed and available at Hospital and community care area.**
- Any decision regarding best deployment of staff to be subject of discussion with INMO; **Agreed.**
- Provision of WHO recommended personal protective equipment - including appropriate masks, long sleeved gowns, eye protection and gloves; **Agreed.**
- Staff training in best practice in removing personal protective equipment: **Agreed and commenced.**
- Supplies to be available, where recommended in the community and in hospital services; **Agreed.**
- Provision of detailed escalation plans in each of the 29 hospitals where attendance via Emergency departments and needing isolation are most likely to appear; **Agreed, responsibility of winter action teams and local hospital managers to notify all staff.**
- Details of responsibilities in an emergency plan of this kind by grade, and provision of 24/7 rosters for persons in charge of the situation; **Agreed, responsibility of winter action teams and local hospital managers to notify all staff.**
- Details of the plan to prioritise isolation facilities, intensive care and high dependency beds if required at short notice; **Agreed, responsibility of winter action teams and local hospital managers to notify all staff.**
- Specific instruction and guidelines for nurses and midwives and others who may be directly caring for persons testing positive for this virus, in particular the necessity for self-isolation and where this should occur including community contact; **HSE to provide these details to the INMO Monday 2ND March.**
- Any period of time where nurses or midwives must be absent from work due to precautionary self-isolation will be treated as special leave with pay; **Agreed.**

- Direction to agency nurses: HSE advise that all instructions to directly hired staff have been issued to agencies supplying nurses and midwives to the health services. The INMO have made contact directly with Nurse On Call and this has been confirmed. Agency nurses must request the specific guidelines from their agency and the INMO have sought the same protections as those available to directly hired staff be made available, this includes training, and special leave with pay if requested to self-isolate by the hirer .
- The INMO has, in the case of private hospitals and GP practices, requested the HSE to confirm that the same preparations and responses are ongoing in respect of these services, to include provision of all best practice guidelines and protective equipment to nurses in private hospitals/nursing homes and GP practices, and that any instruction to self-isolate if required, will be treated as special leave with pay. **HSE to provide these details to the INMO Monday 2ND March.**
- If isolation nursing is required, the guidelines from the WHO recommend frequent breaks for the nurse involved; **HSE to provide these details to the INMO Monday 2ND March.**