
HIQA's public consultation on draft recommendations on ICT enablement of Older Persons Services in Ireland

Thank you for the invitation to participate in HIQA's public consultation on draft recommendations on ICT enablement of Older Persons Services in Ireland. As the independent statutory regulator of pharmacists and pharmacies in Ireland, the PSI welcomes the opportunity to work in partnership with other regulatory authorities, including HIQA, on initiatives to ensure the provision of safe and reliable healthcare to patients in all health and social care settings.

The PSI recognises the importance of access to and the use of health information that is accurate, reliable, valid, timely, relevant, legible, and complete in the delivery of safe and reliable healthcare. We agree that the current ICT infrastructure in Ireland's health and social care sector is highly fragmented with major gaps and silos of information which prevents the safe and effective transfer of information, and hampers the development of new healthcare services and processes.

As the regulatory body for pharmacists and pharmacies engaged in frequent direct care to patients across the health system, including a high proportion of older people with additional and often complex healthcare needs, the PSI is aware of the challenges that the current ICT infrastructure presents for all health and social care professionals, including pharmacists, on a daily basis in lack of timely access to a patient's medication history, diagnoses and relevant associated contemporaneous information to ensure a full and accurate clinical check can be performed before deciding to dispense prescribed medication, or when making recommendations about non-prescribed treatments. Indeed, we are aware that there is still a reliance on paper-based records and documentation within pharmacies, albeit this has transitioned somewhat with the electronic transfer of prescriptions via Healthmail.

We agree that the transfer of patient information at transitions of care is a particular challenge in the current ICT landscape. We also recognise that our overall health system has a mix of public and private providers and the effective sharing of information requires this challenge to be addressed. Pharmacies too, as privately owned health care providers, have ICT systems which are not integrated with those used in other areas of the health service. As the only definitive source of medication **dispensed** to patients in the community setting, among other important health information, it is essential that any future proposed ICT solutions to enable the sharing of health information will consider access and input by pharmacists, as relevant to their roles in the provision of services and care to patients, including those services that will evolve or change as envisaged by Sláintecare.

We welcome and are supportive of HIQA's draft recommendations on ICT enablement of Older Persons Services in Ireland. In particular, we agree that an appropriate governance structure should be identified to develop the overarching strategy for the full engagement of the public and private sector in the ICT enablement of health service delivery, in line with national policy and the Sláintecare vision. We consider it essential that core user groups, in both public and private sectors,

are engaged during the planning, design and implementation of systems. Extensive analysis of the information needs of health and social care professionals across all settings should be undertaken. This should include the information needs of pharmacists in both public and private sectors, where they are delivering care to patients.

The PSI looks forward to continuing to work with HIQA in the future in delivering on our respective regulatory roles to provide and assure patient and public health and safety. In particular, we remain available to engaging with HIQA on particular aspects of this important project that relate to our role, the legal and regulatory requirements of those registered with us, or in identifying the range of pharmacy services to be engaged with in understanding end-user considerations, to the fullest extent possible.

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