Opening of Acute Medical Assessment Unit and Magnetic Resonance Imaging facility at Connolly Hospital

Remarks by Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton, T.D.

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Check against delivery

➢ It is a pleasure to be here in the heart of Dublin West to celebrate new developments in Connolly Hospital.

➢ Connolly, as we know, serves a population of over 330,000, from Blanchardstown out to Finglas West, over to Lucan and into North Kildare and South Meath.

➢ All of these areas are continuing to grow and their expansion is being met by developments at this site, most recently the announcement of a satellite centre for the new Children’s Hospital.

➢ The hospital was founded in 1955 in response to the rise in the incidence of tuberculosis: the development of services over the next four decades was haphazard, with over two thirds of the acute medical beds, including the Coronary Care Unit, located away from the main hospital block and a significant number of services provided from temporary prefabricated buildings.

➢ In Connolly, as in many of our hospitals, the physical structures which were acceptable at the time of construction were not ‘future proofed’ and could not meet the more stringent guidelines demanded by modern medicine.

➢ The €96m Capital Development Programme which commenced in 2000 and was commissioned in 2004, addressed deficits at the site by replacing the older buildings with a modern facility, integrating new buildings with substantially upgraded existing ones to provide suitable settings for the Emergency Department, Coronary Care and Cardiac Unit, Theatre Suite and Intensive Care Unit, amongst others.
The latest developments at Connolly, which myself and Minister Varadkar are very pleased to be invited to celebrate with you, are of course the Acute Medical Assessment Unit and the recently installed MRI scanner.

Optimising our health care system is a combination of policy, evidence-based best practice and essential investment, coherently implemented and carefully managed to maximize the potential of constrained resources. Our job, as a government, is to ensure that the policies we develop are based on the best available evidence of effectiveness in order to assure providers that they are delivering safe, high quality, reliable care and to benefit the outcomes of those who require care – in other words, to provide a healthcare service that is focussed on achieving quality outcomes that matter to patients, with efficient use of resources.

In that regard, I wish to acknowledge the staff in Connolly who have contributed very substantially to work which will facilitate the introduction of ‘Money follows the Patient’: this is an essential component of the move to an equitable, single-tier universal health insurance system where every patient is insured and has their care financed on the same basis and where hospitals are fairly resourced for the transparent delivery of quality care.

Finally, I wish you every success with the continued growth and future development of the hospital: whilst I hope that I will not need to avail of the services here very often, I am very glad to have such an active and vibrant facility close by and I will be maintaining an equally active and vibrant interest in its future.

Thank you.