

## Press Release

The Health and Social Care Regulatory Forum of Chief Executives recently launched on their various websites a publication entitled **Framework for Public and Service User Involvement in Health and Social Care Regulation in Ireland** (copy attached).

This Forum of Chief Executives of Health Regulatory Bodies was established in 2008 to provide a mechanism for exploring opportunities to harmonise certain business processes, share best practice and facilitate coordination where appropriate between member organisations. It also aims to share knowledge and expertise on matters of common interest with a view to enhancing the overall practice of health and personal social services regulation in Ireland for the benefit of public health. Background and terms of reference of the Health and Social Care Regulatory Forum is attached as a separate document.

In response to the recently published recommendations of the Commission for Patient Safety and Quality Assurance that 'robust and validated patient and public involvement should be a requirement for all health care oversight, scrutiny, quality control and other accountability mechanisms' (Commission on Patient Safety and Quality Assurance, 2008, R4.4), the Forum have published this report to encourage greater service user involvement among agencies involved in ensuring patient safety and quality assurance in the Irish health services.

Service users and members of the public should be involved in the work of regulatory bodies:

- **To promote openness and transparency** by enabling the public to review service quality and be directly involved in the development of rules and standards;
- **To act as a safety solution** so that health and social services can learn from the experiences of service users, carers and others, particularly as it relates to adverse events;
- **To improve the quality of regulated services** by ensuring that services are sensitive to the needs and preferences of service users and the public; and
- **To focus the work of regulatory bodies on service users and encourage public accountability.**

The framework points out that the countries with the best public services and indeed health care systems have very high levels of citizen empowerment, where public services strive to be truly personalised and power to shape those services is put as close to the individual citizen as possible. This is something which Ireland has made some progress on in the recent past but as highlighted by the OECD Ireland needs to extend the customer focus 'beyond narrowly defined

customer service initiatives to all aspects of the work of the public service' (OECD, 2008 p.228)

The report refers to five levels of public and service user involvement: to **Inform** and **Educate**; to **Gather Information**; to **Discuss**; to **Engage**; and to **Partner**. Examples of best practice are provided for each activity.

The report has been considered by the Board/Councils of the various regulatory agencies involved in the Forum and a commitment and a high intent has been expressed to ensure public and service user involvement in future regulatory activities.

The Forum is currently in the process of establishing a website to facilitate those who wish to engage for any reason with one of the regulatory bodies.

The **Framework for Public and Service User Involvement in Health and Social Care Regulation in Ireland** may be accessed at any of the following sites (post Jan. 25)

An Bord Altranais - [www.nursingboard.ie](http://www.nursingboard.ie)

Dental Council - [www.dentalcouncil.ie](http://www.dentalcouncil.ie)

Food Safety Authority Ireland - [www.fsai.ie](http://www.fsai.ie)

Health and Safety Authority – [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)

Health and Social Care Professionals Council – [www.hscpc.ie](http://www.hscpc.ie)

Health Information and Quality Authority – [www.hiqa.ie](http://www.hiqa.ie)

Irish Medicines Board – [www.imb.ie](http://www.imb.ie)

Medical Council – [www.medicalcouncil.ie](http://www.medicalcouncil.ie)

Mental Health Commission – [www.mhcirl.ie](http://www.mhcirl.ie)

National Social Work Qualifications Board – [www.nswqb.ie](http://www.nswqb.ie)

Opticians Board – [www.opticiansboard.ie](http://www.opticiansboard.ie)

Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland – [www.pharmaceuticalsociety.ie](http://www.pharmaceuticalsociety.ie)

Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council – [www.phecit.ie](http://www.phecit.ie)

Radiological Protection Institute – [www.rpii.ie](http://www.rpii.ie)

Veterinary Council – [www.vci.ie](http://www.vci.ie)

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