

UltraNews

eNewsletter of Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate



Navigate stories

Welcome to our Summer 2020 edition of **UltraNews**

Facemasks:
A sign of the times

Impact of COVID-19

A patient's perspective:
Birth and COVID-19

Virtual visiting initiative
for babies in NICU

5 May 2020: International
Day of the Midwife

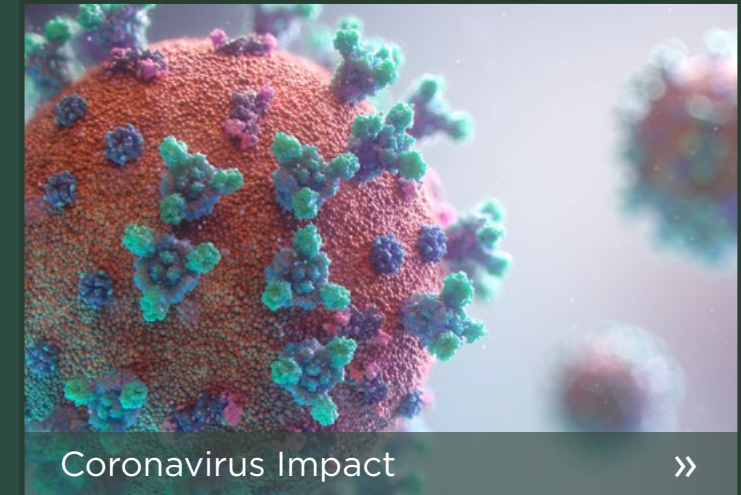
New leadership positions

Other news

UltraNews newsletter is intended for circulation among staff members of Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate. Extracts from UltraNews should not be published without the permission of the editor.



Facemask design



Coronavirus Impact



Patient Perspective



Virtual Visiting



Day of the Midwife



Leadership Positions





Welcome to the Summer edition of UltraNews, the Ireland South staff newsletter

Impact of COVID-19 and collaboration across our network

Welcome to the Summer 2020 edition of UltraNews, an issue dedicated to the extraordinary times we have all found ourselves in due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. From our patient experience, to our typical working day, evolving clinical guidelines, increased education, training and research, everything has been transformed in a collaborative effort to flatten the curve and slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Over thirty babies are born every day in Ireland South and even the presence of a global pandemic doesn't change that. Pregnancy is a special time, full of excitement and anticipation. But for many expectant mothers during this outbreak, anxiety and uncertainty are clouding this otherwise happy time. The strict no visitor policy for the safety of patients, babies and staff is particularly challenging for families - partners cannot attend ultrasound scans for example, and their experience is limited to a short time during and after the birth. It is also very difficult for staff, who have been working around the clock to prepare for a surge in cases. Luckily that surge has not yet come to pass in our maternity services. We continue to be sincerely grateful for the partnership, support and cooperation of parents and staff as we work to protect and care for women and babies during these challenging times.

While the crisis brings with it a sense of fear, isolation and loss, it also brings a sense of hope, connectedness, and camaraderie. I am immensely proud to see colleagues in all our maternity

units mobilise, prepare patient pathways, secure supplies of PPE, develop training for staff and prepare for virtual clinics, deliver examinations in a different landscape, conduct valuable research, disseminate high quality evidence and advice on how to treat patients and prevent virus transmission, volunteer for initiatives and so much more. Seeing staff work with such a sense of purpose and togetherness across our network of maternity hospitals/units in Cork, Kerry, Waterford and Tipperary is testament to their agility, commitment and dedication to the women, babies and families in our region.

Local businesses have been beyond generous donating supplies, treats, food and car parking spaces to frontline staff for which we are extremely grateful. Our community has been industrious too making facemasks for family, friends and healthcare workers – we ran a facemask design competition in Cork recently, to acknowledge and celebrate their ingenuity and we're delighted to share photos of staff wearing the colourful and creative entries in this newsletter. We hope you enjoy this newsletter as a small slice of history experienced through the many examples of the impact of the crisis on our maternity units/hospitals, on our approach to education, research and innovation, on our people and day-to-day working lives and on our patient experience.

In addition, we can also report on significant development posts for the Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate. Key finance, operations

and quality posts have been fulfilled and due to the COVID-19 emergency, seven Clinical Lead posts have been formally expedited by South / South West Hospital Group and are now in place. We look forward to executive authority being extended from CUMH to maternity, gynaecology and neonatology services in all units in the near future.

The crisis is far from over. We are still living through an historic pandemic and our efforts need to be viewed as a marathon rather than a sprint. We all look forward to the day this pandemic becomes part of our memories and the history books rather than a daily experience.

We are privileged and honoured to care for women, babies and their families in our region.

Please stay well and keep up the great work.

John R. Higgins

Clinical Director
Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate
Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
University College Cork
South / South West Hospital Group



IMPACT ON IRELAND SOUTH WOMEN & INFANTS DIRECTORATE

Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate has had to make changes to ensure it can keep mothers, babies and staff safe amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Changes include visitor restrictions, social distancing, virtual appointments, the wearing of masks, student exams being brought forward, the focus of research and education changing and more.

Ireland South coordinated response

The biggest impact for patients has been the restriction on visitors put in place by all hospitals. Women admitted for induction of labour, or in labour can have one nominated companion. This companion can join the patient when she is in labour or called for caesarean section. For all other inpatients and postnatal inpatients, no visitors are allowed. This is especially difficult for expectant mothers going for scans without their partner, or on the postnatal ward without family visits allowed.

Across the Directorate, gynaecology and antenatal clinics are moving many appointments to outreach centres or alternative locations and urgent elective procedures are being prioritised for theatre. Social distancing has become the new norm and waiting areas are adjusted to minimise footfall. The Twitter account for Ireland

South Women & Infants Directorate @IrelandSouthWID was launched to help keep the public informed about service changes. Mindful that expectant mothers are really feeling the effects that this global emergency is having on their pregnancy journey, a video was created featuring midwives answering some of the most frequently asked questions as to what people can expect before, during and after birth. A selection of midwives from each of our four units featured in this video, published on Twitter and YouTube on International Day of the Midwife, 5 May 2020.

A new YouTube account was also launched for Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate to house new videos being created. On 1 July 2020 a new microsite was launched dedicated to information on COVID-19 for pregnant women. It includes the latest research and key information for women attending all hospitals/units in our network (<https://coronavirus.irelandsouthwid.ie/>).

In order to assist with the large scale planning and preparations to deal with COVID-19, the Executive Management Committee (EMC) of Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate hold regular update teleconference calls. Early in the crisis, these were held daily, moving to twice weekly thereafter.

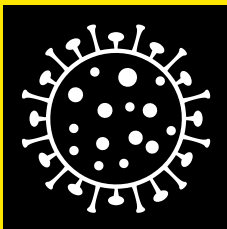
They include all Directors of Midwifery, Lead Consultants from each unit and other key staff and are led by Clinical Director, Professor John R. Higgins.

A COVID-19 Advisory Committee was also established in Cork University Maternity Hospital (CUMH) with multidisciplinary membership. The committee serves as a platform to discuss and propose solutions and help implement the response to COVID-19 in CUMH and the wider Directorate. Education is a key focus, with all units holding Coronavirus education sessions and personal protective equipment (PPE) training and simulation drills.

The following pages outline the impact of COVID-19 on each of our maternity hospitals/units in Cork, Kerry, Waterford and Tipperary.



Pictured above: EMC meetings taking place with social distancing in mind in CUMH and with maternity units joining via videoconference (Microsoft Teams)



COVID-19: Impact on Cork University Maternity Hospital

by Katie Bourke, Director of Midwifery, CUMH

Cork University Maternity Hospital (CUMH) has made many changes since early March to keep everyone safe. One of the simplest changes relate to the very first step of a person's contact with CUMH during their pregnancy – their booking appointment. These are now done over the telephone which means that expectant mothers do not need to try and come into the hospital and find childcare to do so. It's proving very successful so far.

CUMH operated a number of outreach clinics for expectant mothers before COVID-19 outbreak, and these clinics are now seeing more patients.

Extra efforts are being put into keeping women attending these appointments safe, including reducing the numbers of people in

waiting rooms. People are being asked to stay in their cars and wait until they are called to come in for their appointment.

In March, a marquee was erected outside the entrance to CUMH to allow for the screening of patients, visitors and staff at the hospital. On arrival at the hospital, you are met with a series of signs about symptoms of COVID-19 and are asked to turn right if you do not have symptoms. Your temperature is checked and you are given a mask. These visible measures help to provide reassurance, important for both staff and patients.

Across the hospital, colour coded zoning posters have been put in place to allow staff to easily identify what precautions are required in each area.

Opposite top: Marquees outside CUMH to screen all patients, staff and visitors for symptoms of COVID-19. **Centre:** Staff pack facemasks to give to patients and staff on entry to CUMH; 6 April 2020 in CUMH, Professor John R. Higgins gives an 08:30 Monday morning briefing; 28 May 2020 in CUMH, daily huddle takes place on 5th floor corridor. **Bottom:** 27 March in CUMH theatre: Social distancing during the morning huddle; sample of zoning posters clarifying the precautions required.



IRELAND SOUTH SOUTH & EAST UCC

GREEN ZONE

- Hand hygiene is paramount
- Normal work clothes
- Standard precautions (gloves, apron as necessary)

Review and approved by the Clinical Director 05/04/20 Version 1.0 Published 05/04/20

As regards service changes, the Domino service postnatal home visit service was paused and the Newborn Hearing Screening Programme was temporarily suspended. The 4th floor, which is usually used by gynaecology patients, has been turned into a COVID-19 ward and midwives have been trained on how to deal with patients who have contracted the disease.

Many briefings and meetings now take place on the long bright corridors of CUMH where social distancing and large numbers of staff can be accommodated.

The CUMH website is also being updated regularly with both patient and staff information in relation to COVID-19 including service changes and useful resources for expectant mothers.

A sense of community spirit was very evident in Cork with local businesses donating food, marquees, treats, hand sanitiser and car parking spaces to frontline staff for which we are extremely grateful. In addition, CUMH management have arranged for scones and lunch to be delivered daily, a gesture that staff really appreciate.

CUMH also ran a facemask design competition in May 2020, to acknowledge and celebrate the ingenuity of people in the community at home making masks for family and friends. This story appeared in local press (see newspaper cutting on right) and is covered in more detail on page 11.

Katie Bourke, Director of Midwifery CUMH wishes to acknowledge efforts made by all staff within CUMH during these extraordinary times.



Above: Food, treats and car parking spaces for staff in CUMH. **Opposite top:** CUMH website is updated information for patients and staff in relation to COVID-19. **Opposite bottom:** The Echo, 2 June 2020 featuring the 'Design a Facemask' competition in CUMH

CORK UNIVERSITY MATERNITY HOSPITAL

COVID-19 & CUMH

Maternity Care

NeoNatal Unit

Gynaecology

Research & Education

Visitor & Patient Services

Publications

News & Events at CUMH

eHealth Maternity

Contact Us

Visiting Hours

COVID-19 UPDATE >>

Husbands & Partners
7am to 11pm

Siesta For Mothers

Cork University Maternity Hospital

CUMH & COVID-19

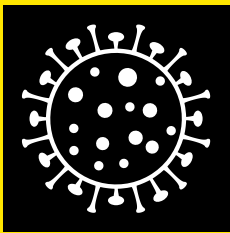
INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

- VISITOR RESTRICTIONS: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Safety Notice and Visitor Restrictions - [find out more](#)
- PATIENT FAQS: COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions - [find out more](#)
- HELPFUL RESOURCES: List of useful downloads, websites and videos for expectant mothers - [find out more](#)
- ONLINE LEARNING - PREGNANCY: List of online videos useful during pregnancy - [find out more](#)
- ONLINE LEARNING - POSTNATAL: List of online videos useful during the postnatal period - [find out more](#)
- SYMPTOM SCREENING: Detailed walkthrough of what a patient can expect on entering CUMH due to COVID-19 Symptom Screening measures. [DOWNLOAD](#)
- VIRTUAL TOUR: Virtual tour of Cork University Maternity Hospital - [find out more](#)

INFORMATION FOR STAFF

- STAFF FAQS: Staff Frequently Asked Questions re: COVID-19 - [find out more](#)
- STAFF MEMOS: Staff Memos re: COVID-19 - [find out more](#)





COVID-19: Impact on South Tipperary General Hospital

By Sinéad Heaney, Director of Midwifery, STGH

As we know, a pandemic doesn't stop for anyone and our midwives and doctors have been as busy as ever in the maternity unit in South Tipperary General Hospital (STGH).

Like all hospitals in Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate, the visitor restrictions have been difficult for patients here in STGH. The uncertainty and anxiety that patients are feeling is softened by the fact that staff are doing everything in their power to make sure new parents feel supported in these exceptional times.

We also launched a STGH Maternity Services Twitter account @MaternitySTGH in March 2020 to help keep the public informed and reassured.

The now twice weekly videoconference calls with the Executive Management Committee (EMC) of Ireland South have been a very useful medium to discuss the impact of COVID-19 and keep up to date with the situation and planning across all units.

While the sense of camaraderie is always strong in a smaller unit, this has really come to the fore during the pandemic. Staff have also really appreciated the complimentary coffees from STGH management and lunch provided

on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays thanks to Camida. The generosity of local businesses to healthcare workers in Clonmel has been outstanding.

Exceptional times can drive the opportunity for change. We had to learn new systems to enable us to keep in contact with our patients, especially for important antenatal education such as breastfeeding.

Sinéad Heaney, Director of Midwifery STGH wishes to acknowledge efforts made by all staff within the maternity services during these unprecedented times.

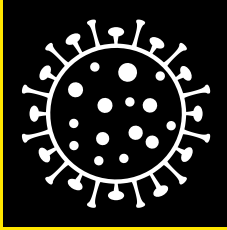
Top left: *Mary O'Donnell, CMM3 receiving her complimentary coffee for all hospital staff from senior management*

Top right: *Maggie Dowling, Shift Leader, Claire Barrett and Lizette Gouws, Staff Midwives receiving their complimentary coffee*

Bottom left: *Brid O'Mahoney, CMM2; Mary Ryan, Staff Midwife, Kay Ahearne, Staff Midwife; Tommy Murray, Household Manager and Mighela Coen, Staff Midwife dropping off the meals from Camida*

Bottom right: *Carmel Byrne, Lactation Consultant STGH, preparing for her first virtual antenatal breastfeeding class*





COVID-19: Impact on University Hospital Waterford

By Paula Curtin, Director of Midwifery, UHW

In the interest of patient and public safety, strict visitor restrictions were put in place in University Hospital Waterford (UHW), in line with other units in Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate. Women admitted for induction of labour, or in labour can have one nominated companion. This companion can join the patient when she is in labour or called for caesarean section. For patients in Neonatal Intensive Care Unit only mothers are allowed visit - this was amended to allow both parents at the end of May 2020. For all other inpatients and postnatal inpatients, no visitors are allowed. We have been very mindful of how difficult this is for patients and are very grateful for their cooperation.

While it has been largely business as usual in Waterford maternity services, some service changes have been made. The Newborn Hearing Screening Programme was suspended on a temporary basis but is now back up and running with plans in place to clear any backlog remaining.

Home birth service continued with adaptation of existing guidelines to include COVID-19 risk assessment. The Integrated Hospital and Community Midwifery (IHCMS) is moving towards increased antenatal visits in the community.

To keep staff up-to-date with COVID-19 related information, we created a short newsletter called 'Corona Condensed' which has proved popular.

We also recently bid a fond farewell to Mary Gough Kelly, Clinical Midwifery Manager 2 in our delivery suite-by forming a social distance guard of honour on the morning of her retirement. Local Radio WLR also interviewed her on her role.

As regards our ways of working in UHW, the daily huddle has been moved to a larger space to allow for social distancing. The short 10 minute meeting includes up to date COVID-19 information for attendees.

Programmes of education for personal protective equipment (PPE) and COVID-19 in general have been undertaken in small groups, and delivered with social distancing in mind. Continuing education has been reviewed by the In-House Education Committee. Priorities have been given to planning the following:

1. Small group Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP)
2. Online K2 for CTG education
3. Succinct PowerPoint package of education including:
 - MMBRACE
 - Record Keeping
 - Medication management
 - IMEWS and Sepsis
 - Further advice is being sought around PROMPT and BLS training.

We have been pilot testing an online platform to deliver antenatal classes. This was undertaken as a small pilot and is moving towards full classes now. It has been very positively evaluated by participants.

Paula Curtin, Director of Midwifery UHW wishes to acknowledge efforts made by all staff within the maternity services during these unprecedented times.



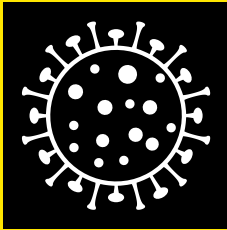
Top left: Vickie Byrne and Brid Ahearne returning to UHW from a successful homebirth



Top right: Newsletter 'Corona Condensed' issued to UHW staff to keep them up-to-date with COVID-19 information



Right: Mary Gough Kelly, Clinical Midwifery Manager 2, UHW on the morning of her retirement



COVID-19: Adaption of roles in University Hospital Kerry



Pictured above: Deirdre Colgan, CNS Ultra sonographer; Carrie Dillon, CMS Bereavement; Marie Nolan, CNS Diabetes; Majella Mangan, CMS Ultrasonographer; Claire Fleming Kelliher, CMS Ultrasonographer (Missing from Photo) Note: Photo taken pre COVID-19 restrictions

In these unprecedented times, the redeployment of staff to other areas has become a necessity, therefore, diminishing a number of services to our parents utilising our maternity services. The following is an overview of how the Clinical Midwife/Nurse Specialists within the maternity services in UHK have adapted their current roles in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Carrie Dillon, CMS Bereavement, UHK

As the CMS Bereavement in the maternity services at UHK, my role in bereavement care for women experiencing pregnancy loss has adapted, albeit, on a different platform with reduced personal interaction.

The majority of my work has become phone based with several hospital appointments being deferred. Therefore, women are receiving results over the phone which certainly does not compensate for the human touch in a face-to-face meeting. I continue to meet with the women as inpatients, respecting social distancing and wearing a mask.

The compassionate act of giving a 'hug' when a woman is experiencing pregnancy loss has been denied due to our COVID-19 restrictions and the isolation that can be associated with pregnancy loss is certainly heightened in this current crisis. This is a huge challenge now for bereavement midwives, with women's grief being delayed and certainly going forward with further repercussions that delayed grief can bring.

To support the on-going crisis within our maternity unit, I have been nominated as the COVID-19 Coordinator for the maternity services. This involves daily updates and management of staff and patient details within the COVID-19 pathway.

Deirdre Colgan, CNS Ultrasonographer, UHK

With the presence of COVID-19 in our community, we are faced with an unprecedented situation. We have had to adapt our roles accordingly, in order to care for and protect the welfare of our pregnant women and colleagues.

In accordance with HSE guidelines, we had to reduce the amount of people entering the department and also reduce the face-to-face contact time we had with the women. They are now attending unaccompanied for their ultrasound scan and the scan time has also been reduced.

There is greater demand on the ultrasonographer's service, not only with the time allocation for scanning, but to ensure that the women feel supported emotionally at what can be a very vulnerable time. We are very fortunate in University Hospital Kerry to be equipped to provide full services to our expectant mothers, with all ultrasound clinics still operating, facilitating comprehensive antenatal care.



Pictured above: Martina O'Sullivan Darcy, CMS, Sexual Health/STI UHK; Máiréad O'Sullivan, Staff Nurse, Neonatal Unit, UHK
Note: Photo taken pre COVID-19 restrictions

Marie Nolan, CNS Diabetes in Pregnancy, UHK

Our weekly medical/antenatal clinic has become a virtual clinic. All women with diabetes email their blood glucose readings to a dedicated maternal diabetes email address. These are reviewed by the Consultant and I, a plan of care is decided, either to continue with dietary and lifestyle management or to commence insulin therapy.

All women with thyroid issues are contacted and advised by the Consultant via telephone, and if prescriptions are required, they are posted out to these patients. Blood glucose monitors are posted out to the women with a history of Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM) and instructions on its use given over the phone. Some face-to-face appointments continue with women who need to commence insulin therapy and for newly diagnosed GDM. Appointments for the Oral Glucose Tolerance Test continue as normal. The women are contacted the day before their appointment and advised that they can wait in their car between blood test, if desired. Video link calls for future clinics are currently being set up.

Martina O'Sullivan Darcy, CMS, Sexual Health/STI Service, UHK

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, my role in routine sexually transmitted infection (STI) service provision has been curtailed and all STI appointments are accommodated through the South Infirmary Victoria University Hospital in Cork.

Sexual health provision for UHK continues, however facilitation of the National Foundations Programme for Sexual Health Promotion and

teaching programmes for the community and secondary schools in Co. Kerry have been cut back.

I have adapted my role in maternity services providing care as a midwife for pregnant women attending antenatal booking clinics in UHK. I have been instrumental in the development of the outreach maternity clinic in Centre Point and I am developing policy, practice and procedure guidelines with regard to infectious diseases, including COVID-19, for use in maternity services. These pathways for patient care need constant updating as the scientific information changes and as we learn more about this virus.

Máiréad O'Sullivan, Neonatal Staff Nurse/Lactation Consultant, UHK

During the COVID-19 pandemic, my role expanded as the lactation support person in UHK maternity services, to provide assistance to the mothers in the postnatal and neonatal unit. Initially when restrictions were implemented, antenatal breastfeeding preparation classes were deferred. To facilitate this education on breastfeeding, virtual recordings were created for the women to access remotely. Due to social distancing requirements, the use of visual aids and other educational materials are used to provide reassurance to mothers. Following discharge, phone calls are offered to further support the mothers in their home environment.

Sandra O'Connor, Director of Midwifery UHK wishes to acknowledge efforts made by all staff within the maternity services during these unprecedented times.



Virtual Visiting for Babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

New initiative allows families to remotely check-in on premature babies amid COVID-19 visiting restrictions

Cork University Maternity Hospital introduced a secure video messaging platform in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit in partnership with the INFANT Research Centre at University College Cork. Under normal circumstances, having a baby in the neonatal unit can be a time of significant emotional distress and anxiety for parents. In the early days of the pandemic, significant restrictions on access to the neonatal unit meant that only mums could visit which added to the stress parents were facing. CUMH wanted to help provide comfort to parents during this worrying period.

The safe and secure, virtual visitation platform can be accessed at any time, from any device and is available at no cost to the parents. NICU staff, coordinated by Neonatal Nurse Manager, Lucille Bradfield, record short video messages and updates of each baby which can then be sent directly to parents via the vCreate platform. It is simple to use and parents can easily download videos to share with siblings, grandparents and other family members.

Commenting on the system, Professor Gene Dempsey, Consultant Neonatologist at CUMH and Principal Investigator at INFANT, UCC said. *“This is a fantastic*

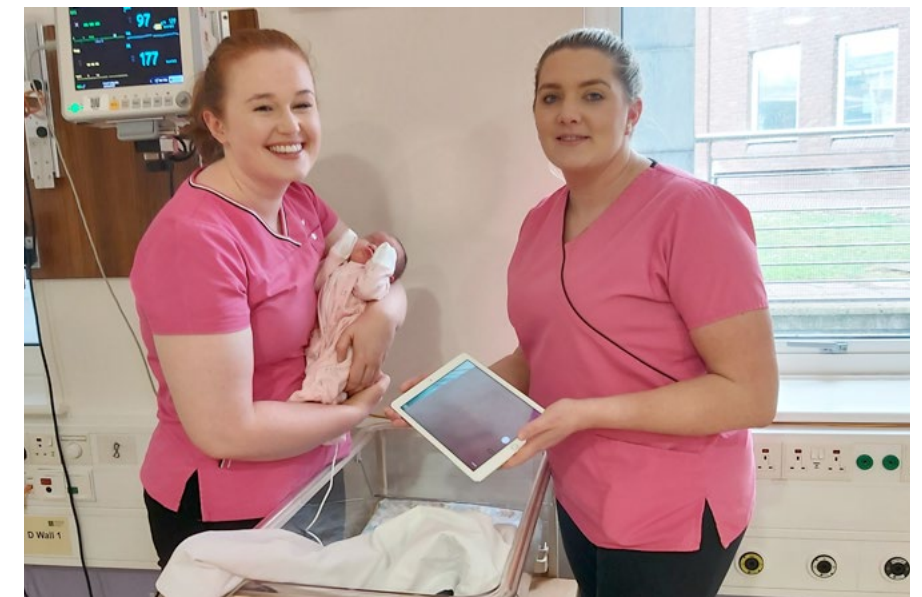
initiative which we hope will go some way to reducing the significant stress that parents are now facing. Whether it’s for a day or two admission, or indeed many months for our most immature babies, we believe this system, along with its educational material, will alleviate some of the worry that families face in these difficult times.”

Director of the Infant centre, Professor Geraldine Boylan, added that the necessary technology was set up very quickly because of the research infrastructure already in place at the unit.

Nicola Carey is a parent whose son is in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Her family have been using the virtual visitation platform to check on his progress. *“It is great, as his Dad can see the progress he is making on a daily basis. It is great to see him in the morning before I visit. It has been amazing for the anxious grandparents to see him and know he is doing well. It has been brilliant for us,”* she said.

Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate are aiming for the neonatal units in the other three maternity units in the group to have this new technology installed. Under the leadership of Brendan Murphy, Clinical Lead

Neonatology, Ireland South eased visitor restrictions in all neonatal units towards the end of May, allowing dads as well as mums to visit their babies, as long as it is one parent at a time. Staff have been particularly grateful for the support and cooperation from parents as we work in partnership with them to care for tiny babies during these challenging times.



Pictured above: CUMH Neonatal Nurses Lorna Coleman with a NICU baby and Cora Shorten with iPad



PATIENT PERSPECTIVE: Birth during Coronavirus

Adapted from an article in The Irish Sun by Niamh Anderson

New figures from the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation show approximately 15,000 babies were born since the virus broke out in Ireland. Further stats from breastfeeding brand, Lansinoh, revealed 70 per cent of new or expectant mums are anxious due to the pandemic.

To stop the spread of COVID-19, most hospitals are only allowing husbands and partners to visit during the birth which means mums must go it alone for the hours leading up to labour and recovery.

While it's a scary time, doctors and midwives are assuring expectant mums that there is nothing to fear about giving birth in lockdown. And they're doing everything in their power to make sure new parents feel supported.

Second time mum Kim O'Sullivan welcomed her new baby girl just days ago and says her experience giving birth in lockdown couldn't have gone better. Staff in the maternity ward in Cork University Hospital took her under their wing and made sure she was as comfortable as possible without the support of her husband by her side.

The 35-year-old, who is also mum to Ellie, 17 months, said: "The staff realise that mentally, you might be in more of a vulnerable state, so they put a lot of emphasis on minding you. They'll keep you going and it's important to remember to lean on those staff members, they'll take you under their wings."

Kim's baby girl, was born ten days early at a healthy eight pounds. Her husband David was there for the birth and spent a few hours with them before he had to leave due to strict lockdown rules. Kim, from Carrigaline in Co Cork, said the no visitation rules mean mums can spend more time getting to know their babies. She said: "I'm getting to know her now and that time is just lovely, whereas before, I suppose we had so many visitors so we felt like we had to be entertaining them in a way."

Kim looks forward to having more time at home with her daughters and her husband as he will be working from home for the coming months. And she wants other new mums to know that lockdown births are nothing to fear. She said: "All of the staff are absolutely amazing at what they do, it really puts you at ease."



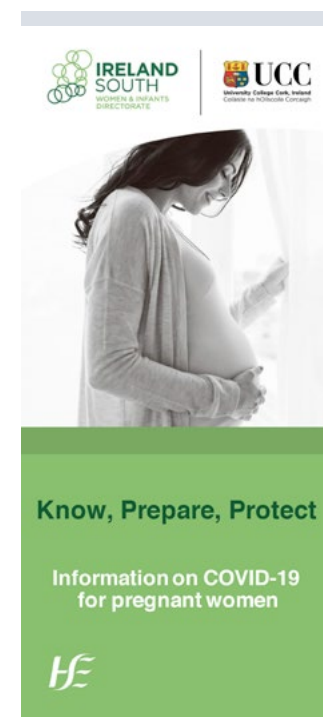
COVID-19 and Pregnancy – Microsite Launched

by Donna Burtchaell, Communications Project Manager
coronavirus.irelandsouthmid.ie

On 1 July 2020, Ireland South launched a microsite for patients that outlines key information about COVID-19 and pregnancy. The microsite builds on content in a printed leaflet that has been handed out to patients in all units. I was delighted to work on this website as it can be easily kept up-to-date with the latest research and ensures our expectant mums can access key information in one location. It's also mobile friendly, has a sensitive tone and reflects the new brand.

Many thanks to Dr Keelin O'Donoghue for her guidance on information for the microsite and to Joye McKernan for her input.

Please contact me on donna.burtchaell@ucc.ie or 087 0962567 if you have additional ideas or suggestions for this microsite.



Facemask Design Competition in CUMH



Pictured above: Kay Cearney's winning mask design modelled by Conor and Lucy Dunne, children of Claire Everard, Quality and Safety Manager with Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate

Cork University Maternity Hospital ran a competition in May 2020 to acknowledge and celebrate the ingenuity of those at home making masks during the pandemic. The competition was to design a facemask and was open to staff, friends and family of CUMH. There was a fantastic response, with a large variety of facemasks submitted by all ages. Points were given for style, design and sustainability and extra points were awarded for those cocooning.

The standard of entries was extremely high and the winner was Kay Cearney, a 72 year-old grandmother of 17 and great grandmother

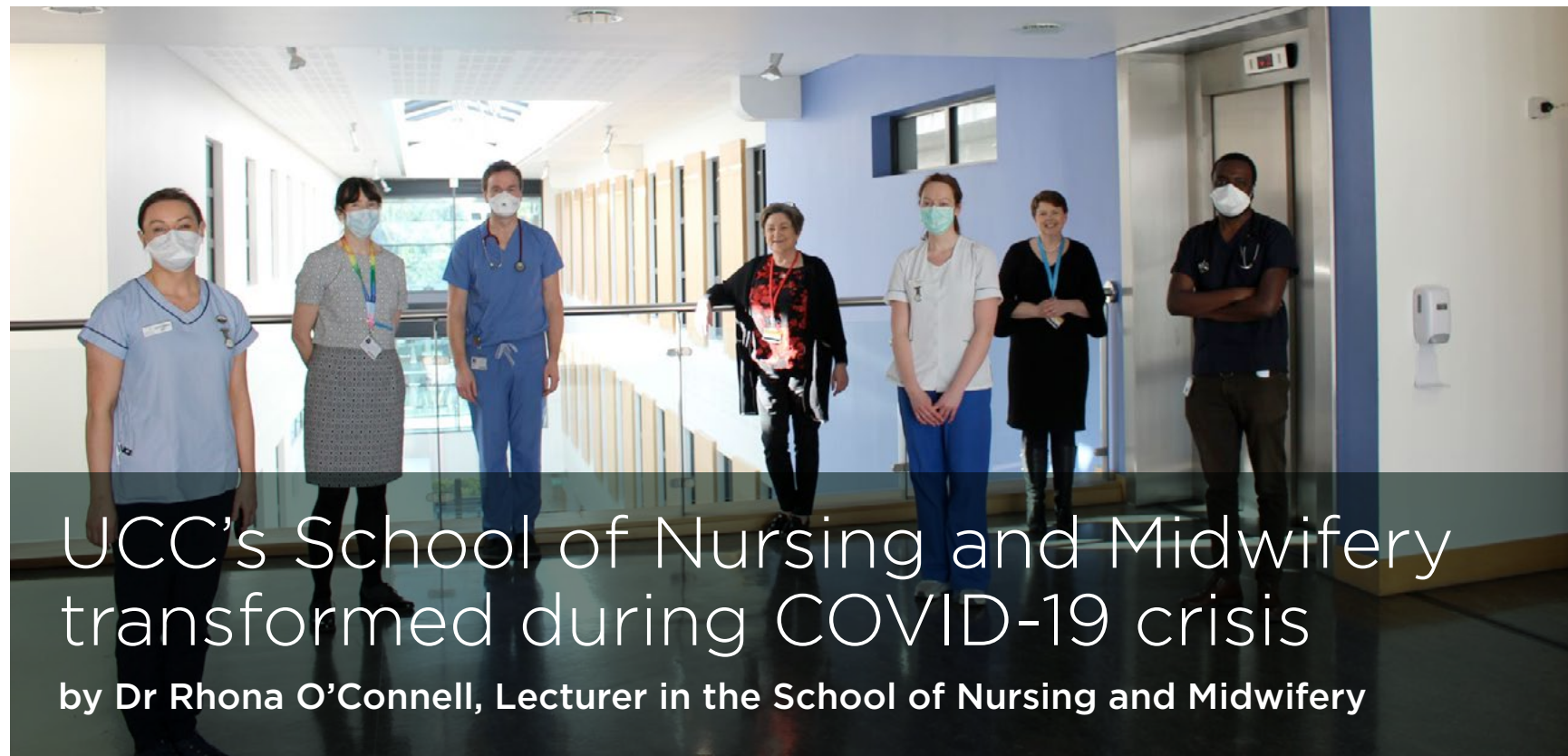
of three, from Cobh in Cork. Kay's prize is an iPad that will help her keep in contact with family over the pandemic.

Kay is an accomplished craftswoman who is a member of the Traditional Lace-makers of Ireland and can turn her hand to sewing and knitting too. She is never without a craft project. *"Because I haven't seen my grandchildren or great grandchildren in a while, I decided to make children's masks so that when they eventually can come and see me, they can put them on and maybe we can get those kisses and hugs that we've missed so dearly,"* she said.

CUMH have made a poster featuring staff wearing the colourful entries, which will be displayed in the hospital for staff and patients to view.

Commenting on the competition, Professor John R. Higgins, Clinical Director Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate said: *"All staff, patients and visitors to CUMH are now wearing facemasks, as are people in the community. We wanted to have a bit of fun with this and shine a light on the talent and support of those in our community, particularly those cocooning. We were delighted to receive such a wide variety of colourful, creative and resourceful entries from people of all ages. Kathleen Carney, cocooning in her homeplace in Cobh, was the winner of the iPad. She is now able to Zoom and see all her grandchildren live which has cheered her up no end."*





UCC's School of Nursing and Midwifery transformed during COVID-19 crisis

by Dr Rhona O'Connell, Lecturer in the School of Nursing and Midwifery

The School of Nursing and Midwifery, UCC has made its Clinical Skills Simulation Resource Centre (CSSRC) available to the HSE to facilitate treatment for vulnerable cancer patients during the COVID-19 crisis. Ordinarily the School uses its simulation centre to facilitate and support student learning.

However during the pandemic, UCC and the HSE have worked together to enable the provision of onsite clinical services at the centre, and deliver chemotherapy to patients with cancer. The first patients received their chemotherapy onsite in UCC on April 6, 2020 supported by the nurses and doctors they would ordinarily encounter in the Mercy University Hospital.

Chemotherapy treatments can affect the body's immune system and reduce the person's ability to fight off infections, and this initiative will help patients with cancer to continue their treatment, while at the same time avoiding hospitals during this COVID-19 crisis.

The open access online CPD module has also been made available to support nurses in HSE intensive care units. The School has loaned out a ventilator to CUH and IV training arms to the South Infirmity Victoria University Hospital (SIVUH) and has provided education facilities for HSE contact tracing education. Research in support of the national emergency includes Professor Drennan leading a Health Research Board (HRB) application looking at impact of COVID-19 on healthcare staff. The School is also working on supporting an accelerated pathway to registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) for year 4 interns to register as nurses early.

Pictured above: Valerie O'Mahony, Oncology Clinical Nurse Manager II, Mercy University Hospital; Margaret McKiernan, Director of Nursing, MUH; Dr Derek Power, Oncology Consultant; Nuala Walshe, Clinical Skills Manager, School of Nursing and Midwifery, UCC; Marie O'Connor Oncology Staff Nurse, MUH; Professor Josephine Hegarty, Head of School of Nursing and Midwifery, UCC; Dr Ayman Amasayb, Oncology Registrar pictured at the School of Nursing and Midwifery, UCC



HIHI request COVID-19 products service and expertise

HIHI is working with Enterprise Ireland and other government partners to support our healthcare system. To help with this, they are collating a database of products, services, resources, expertise, research etc, that may provide support for Ireland during the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim is to capture all products, services and expertise in one location so that it can be reviewed by those who are looking for solutions - urgent and longer term.

What do you need to do?

If you have a solution, product or expertise that is directly related to COVID-19, please fill out the form via <https://hih.ie/engage/coronavirus-COVID-19/>

What will HIHI do with this information?

Working with **Enterprise Ireland**, HIHI will direct your information to wherever it is needed. They may be back in touch with you for further information. They cannot guarantee that your information will match a need or be used, but this database will capture as many solutions as possible, some may be needed now, some at a later stage.

The offices of Health Innovation Hub Ireland are currently closed due to outbreak of Coronavirus COVID-19. They continue to work remotely and are contactable by email at info@hih.ie

Domestic Violence Support still available during COVID-19

By Ann-Marie McCarthy, Social Work Team Leader and Chair Domestic Violence Committee CUMH



Pictured above: Sarah Benson, CEO of Women’s Aid; Ann-Marie McCarthy, Chair Domestic Violence Committee CUMH; Fiona Kirby, Secretary Domestic Violence Committee, CUMH; Olive Long, former DOM CUMH; Maria Leahy, Manager Social Work; Margo Noonan, Advanced Nurse Practitioner attached to the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU); Professor Jane O’Callaghan, Director of Child Wellbeing and Protection, University of Sterling, Scotland

There has been a huge local and global surge in Domestic Violence cases due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Sadly, Ireland is no exception with many front line services experiencing massive increases in calls to their services. People are being told to stay at home. But home is not a place of safety for many women.

Pregnancy can be a trigger for domestic violence and existing abuse may get worse during pregnancy or after giving birth. Some figures indicate that 30% of women who experience domestic violence are physically assaulted in pregnancy. Experiencing domestic violence can be a serious risk to the health of a mother and her baby.

The current climate and restrictions that are in place due to COVID-19 will cause strain on many relationships. Schools

and crèches are closed and many women and their partners are working from home. Some people have lost their jobs or are under increased financial strain. This may lead to higher levels of stress and increased tension in relationships. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, women and families have been cut off from many of their formal and informal support networks. However, it is important that you know you are not alone. Domestic and sexual violence support services have been adapted and increased to ensure they remain available to support you during the restrictions which are now in place due to COVID-19.

If you or a pregnant woman you know is experiencing domestic violence please be aware that there is dedicated care available to you across the network of hospitals in Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate. You can phone the numbers below for non-judgmental help and support. Alternatively, you can talk to your doctor or midwife.

<p>Ann-Marie McCarthy Social Work Team Leader Cork University Maternity Hospital 021 492 0567</p>	<p>Emma Moloney Senior Medical Social Worker South Tipperary General Hospital 052 6187604</p>
<p>Helen Donohoe Senior Medical Social Worker University Hospital Waterford 051 842 637</p>	<p>Clodagh Queally Clinical Midwife Manager 2 University Hospital Kerry 066 7184123</p>

We are here to provide you with emotional support and advise you on the practical supports available to you under The Domestic Violence Act 2018. We can also link you with support services that are local to your area. We are here to help.

If you have been impacted by any of the issues raised in this article, please visit www.stillhere.ie or contact any of the following services:

- Women’s Aid – 1800 341 900
- OSS (One Stop Shop) Cork – 1800 497 497
- Sexual Violence Center Cork – 1800 496 496
- Mná Feasa – 021 4211575
- West Cork Women Against Violence – 1800 203 136
- Y.A.N.A. (North Cork) – 022 53915
- Men’s Aid Ireland – 01 5543811

COVID-19 Support during Pregnancy Loss

Pregnancy loss at any time is a difficult and painful experience.
In your grief, the social distancing requirements of COVID-19 management may further increase feelings of isolation. The following information may be a helpful support to you at this time.

- Care**
We continue to provide care for you, your pregnancy, your baby and family during these challenging times.
- Talk: Reach out & Connect**
Tell people you have had a loss. Use telephone contact to remain connected with family, friends, & healthcare professionals by phone, video & social media.
- Self Care & Wellbeing**
Remember the importance of rest, diet, exercise, sleep, grieving process & physical care.
- Medical concerns**
Please contact your GP or Maternity Healthcare Professional.
- Supports**
Further support and information is available from:
www.pregnancyandinfantloss.ie
www.corkmiscarriage.com

Visit **HSE.ie**
For updated factual information and advice
Or call 1850 24 1850

Senior Development Posts and Clinical Leads for Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate

We are delighted to inform you that our three key development posts for the Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate have been filled in April 2020.

- General Manager/Head of Operations: **Miriam Lyons**
- Finance Manager: **Stephen O'Connor**
- Quality and Safety Manager: **Claire Everard**

In addition, **Katie Bourke** has been appointed Director of Midwifery in Cork University Maternity Hospital.

Seven Clinical Lead posts have been formally expedited by SSWHG due to the COVID-19 emergency and have been appointed on an acting basis for a period of six months. They are:

- Clinical Lead UHW: **Dr Eddie O'Donnell**
- Clinical Lead STGH: **Dr Vijay Hiremath**
- Clinical Lead UHK: **Dr Paul Hughes**
- Clinical Lead Neonatology: **Dr Brendan Murphy**
- Clinical Lead Quality and Safety Lead: **Dr Mairead O'Riordan**
- Clinical Lead Gynaecology: **Dr Orfhlaith O'Sullivan**
- Clinical Lead Policies, Procedures and Guidelines: **Dr Karen McNamara**

There is also one Business Manager budgeted for each of the maternity units in STGH, UHW and UHK which will be advertised and appointed as soon as possible.

To help you understand these new roles and their remit, we have outlined a mini profile on each of the appointees on the following pages:



Miriam Lyons

General Manager/Head of Operations,
Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate

Previous positions with this hospital

I've worked in Cork University Maternity Hospital (CUMH) since 2007 and previously worked on the amalgamation of maternity services from Erinville Hospital, St. Finbarr's Maternity Hospital, Bon Secours Maternity Unit and gynaecology services from Cork University Hospital to create Cork University Maternity Hospital.

Previously I worked as a Staff Officer in Erinville hospital and became Business Manager in CUMH in 2013. Thereafter I worked as Business Manager for CUH Paediatrics for a period when it was amalgamated with the maternity services in CUMH in 2014.

Key role responsibilities

I provide day-to-day operational management of Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate

Directorate and contribute to the strategic development of the Directorate and promote and participate in the implementation of change as required.

In addition to providing senior management support to the Group Clinical Director, my role includes managerial and administrative

responsibilities ranging from central functions such as personnel, finance, IT, through the many line functional areas within our Directorate.

What is your key focus over the next 3-6 months?

My key focus is to work collaboratively with each of our maternity units/hospitals in Cork, Waterford, Tipperary and Kerry and to get to know more staff, especially in our units outside Cork.

In addition, I'm focusing on recruiting the outstanding new positions and establishing the team. We are putting the wheels in motion to recruit a business manager for each maternity unit, reporting into me. I'm delighted to have Steve O'Connor as Finance Manager and Claire Everard as Quality Manager on board already.

Can you give us three things on your 'bucket list'?

- I would like to spend more time visiting West Kerry. I really love that part of Ireland, especially the wilds of Dingle.
- Learn the tin whistle.
- I would also love to do the Ballymaloe cookery course. I have a real passion for cooking and this has been on my bucket list for some time – one day I'll make the time to do it!



Steve O'Connor

Finance Manager
Ireland South Women & Infants
Directorate

Previous positions with this hospital

I joined as Finance Manager in March 2020 having spent nearly 15 years in the private sector. This is my first position held within the public service. My career began with nearly ten years within the hedge fund industry. Prior to this role, I spent a further five years in positions within the med-device and pharmaceutical industries.

Key role responsibilities

As Finance Manager, I have to ensure the highest standards of financial reporting and support in compliance with best practice in terms of financial processes, procedures and controls.

The day-to-day role includes overseeing the preparation of monthly management account reporting. I need to analyse and monitor performance against the allocated budget and investigate any major variances as they arise. I provide forecast updates where needed and prepare the finance section of the Annual Service Plan incorporating the budgets for the hospitals and services within the Ireland South Directorate. I also oversee ongoing development of

the reporting system and aid in the implementation of any new systems. Finally, I ensure appropriate financial governance and internal financial controls are in place and always ensure compliance with all legislation.

What is your key focus over the next 3-6 months?

Over the coming months my focus will be on getting to know and understand how the hospital runs. Try to align the financial element of costs and budget with the vision of improving the best care possible within the Directorate. Where there are projects in the pipeline, I will work closely with management in finding processes to implement with the aim to successful providing improved services for patients. On a personal note, I am very aware that I report only on the financial side of the hospital. The frontline staff are vital and I hope to meet as many as I possibly can in the coming months so make sure to say hi when you see me.

Can you give us three things on your 'bucket list'?

- Set foot on every continent in the world (one to go).
- Complete another full ironman.
- Take a road trip on Route 66.



Katie Bourke

Director of Midwifery
Cork University Maternity Hospital
Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate

Title of new position

Director of Midwifery, CUMH

Previous positions with this hospital

I qualified as a nurse in St James Hospital, Dublin and gained experience in an acute hospital in the UK before moving home to do my midwifery training in the Coombe Women and Infants Hospital. I moved from the Coombe to the Erinville in 2002 where I worked within the Unified Maternity Services. Naturally, I then moved into Cork University Maternity Hospital (CUMH) in 2007 when it was established. In CUMH, I've held the roles of Clinical Midwifery Skills Facilitator, Midwifery Practice Development Coordinator and became Assistant Director of Midwifery in 2018. I did a MSc in Nursing & Midwifery in 2012 and also worked as national midwifery theatre lead for the Maternal Newborn Clinical Management System (MN-CMS) in 2014.

I've been in the Acting Director of Midwifery role since December 2019, and I'm now delighted to take on the role as Director of Midwifery, CUMH.

Key role responsibilities

- I am responsible for leading and directing the management of all midwifery / nursing including gynaecology and neonatology services operationally for Cork University Maternity Hospital (CUMH)
- I am responsible and accountable for clinical governance within nursing and midwifery and implement operational and strategic objectives, identifying initiatives and assisting with agreed change management within the hospital.
- I provide strategic and clinical leadership and direction for midwifery / nursing and related

services which results in the delivery of effective, efficient, quality assured and patient centred midwifery / nursing care for CUMH with the Clinical Director and Business Manager.

- I am responsible for the development of proposals for improvements or modernisation of nursing/ midwifery clinical services.

What is your key focus over the next 3-6 months?

- Over the next few months, my focus is on early postnatal transfer home service. This service will provide support for women who are discharged home in collaboration with the public health nurse, with the best interests of mum and baby, and continuity of care in mind. I will be collaborating with my local team here in CUMH and the other Directors of Midwifery in Ireland South so that we implement this service together across the group.
- Another key focus is on capital projects in relation to a suitable and exclusive facility for women's health in CUMH.
- In addition, I aim to progress roles of Advanced Midwife/Nurse Practitioner to further professionalise midwifery in CUMH.
- Resurrecting the 'MaternityONESouth' project is also a key objective.

Can you give us three things on your 'bucket list'?

- Visit Disneyworld in Florida with my son Max (7) and husband in the near future.
- Do some kind of course on interior design, to go with my interest in all things capital projects and my new nickname 'Bob'.
- Learn more about cake decorating. I find it very therapeutic and like to make the odd birthday cake in my spare time.



Claire Everard

Quality and Patient Safety Manager
Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate

Previous positions with this hospital

Like many of the staff in Cork University Maternity Hospital (CUMH), I have worked here since the day it opened and have had many different roles, first as a Staff Midwife having previously worked in the Erinville Hospital in the Labour Ward. When I was completing my Masters in 2009 I worked as a research midwife for a couple of years before I became a clinical midwife manager in 2011. In 2014, I became the Evidence Based Clinical Care Coordinator and in 2017 I completed a Higher Diploma in Quality and Risk Management in Healthcare in UCD. In 2018 while continuing to work in the Quality & Patient Safety Department, I became Acting Practice Development Coordinator, Assistant Director of Midwifery grade.

Key role responsibilities

My aim as the Quality and Patient Safety Manager is to ensure that women and infants receive a service of the highest quality that is delivered safely by the best staff in Ireland.

What is your key focus over the next 3-6 months?

This is the first time there has been a role like mine in the Directorate. I'm delighted that Ireland South recognises the importance of the quality function at a senior management level and has created this role to ensure that patient safety is at the heart of everything we do in maternity services.

My focus is to build on the existing quality, patient safety and risk management structures in CUMH and across Ireland South maternity services to ensure that we can continue to 'deliver' high quality care in a safe way.

Can you give us three things on your 'bucket list'?

- Travel on the Orient Express.
- Run a marathon.
- I play the violin and would love to play in an orchestra.



Dr Eddie O'Donnell

Clinical Lead Obstetrics & Gynaecology
University Hospital Waterford
Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate

Previous positions with this hospital

I started as a consultant in 1999 in Birmingham and did most of my SHO and Registrar training there. I came to Waterford on the very memorable date of 01/01/2001 and so I've developed the enviable skill of telling people how long I've worked in UHW down to the month, or even hour!

Key role responsibilities

Clinical Lead Obstetrics, I also sit on Hospital Executive Management Team. I'm a member of Hospital Serious Incident Management (SIM) team and also Chair the Obstetric Clinical Governance Committee. Finally, I am also a Senior Lecturer in Obstetrics and Gynaecology for Royal College of Surgeons (RCSI) and UCC.

What is your key focus over the next 3-6 months?

A key focus will be filling two new consultant posts and integrating them into the system. The first post is focused on ambulatory gynaecology and we will be interviewing at the end of May for this. The other post is close to being signed off and is a consultant post for gynaecological surgical audit.

A key and interesting challenge will be moving our mindset from working as independent practitioners for the last 18 years, into working within clinical teams. I see many advantages

to working in partnership with one another rather than as individuals, and look forward to this new way of working. I envisage our longer-term consultants working closely with our new colleagues, acting as mentors to facilitate this new way of doing things.

As regards clinical service, my key aim over the next 6 months is to set up a fetal assessment unit to reduce reliance on inpatient beds. We also hope to establish outpatient hysteroscopy in University Hospital Waterford.

Finally, I wish to establish how we can all best work remotely. A lot of our governance activities which have been on hold due to COVID-19 are due to resume with remote login. We have been looking at a number of options including Zoom which many of us have been using both personally as well as professionally.

Can you give us three things on your 'bucket list'?

I do try and do something new and different each year. One of the reasons I moved to Waterford was to be near the sea and it's not something I have taken full advantage of yet. Given that foreign travel is out for the rest of 2020, my focus lies at home. I have a small RIB boat (Rigid Inflatable Boat) and this year I would like to perfect water-skiing and do more fishing.



Dr Vijay Hiremath

Clinical Lead Obstetrics & Gynaecology
South Tipperary General Hospital
Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate

Previous positions with this hospital

- Having completed my MBBS and MD (Obstetrics and Gynaecology) in India, I moved to Ireland in 1995. I have worked in Limerick, Galway and Dublin as part of the HST. I completed my CSCST in 2006 and was appointed as Consultant in South Tipperary General Hospital (STGH) in March 2007.
- I have been working as a lead clinician in STGH in Clonmel since 2007 and have been part of the executive management team in the hospital.
- I am delighted to be officially appointed as the clinical lead for Obstetrics and Gynaecology services in STGH, Clonmel as a part of the Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate.

Key role responsibilities

- Responsible for leading the multidisciplinary maternity team in STGH in conjunction with Sinéad Heaney, Director of Midwifery, to provide safe patient centred care to all the women who attend STGH.
- Part of the Executive team in the hospital and lead the perinatal governance group in STGH.
- Involved in the guideline committee, Sepsis group, Drugs and Therapeutics committee, Surgical and perioperative Directorate.
- Lead colposcopist in STGH and oversee the safe and quality assured services that it provides.
- BST trainer for the Obstetrics and Gynaecology programme and CPSP programme run by RCPI.
- GP trainer for the South East GP scheme.

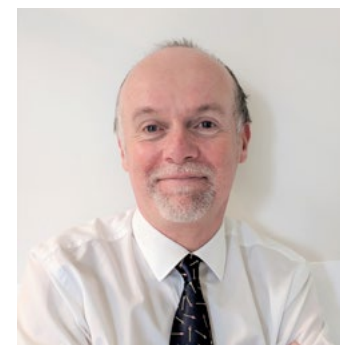
- Supervising consultant for the final year medical students from UCC, in charge of undergraduate teaching.

What is your key focus over the next 3-6 months?

- To continue quality improvements in maternity care with increased patient choice.
- To develop midwifery led services for all women who are suitable.
- To develop outpatient hysteroscopy services and one stop services for menopause, fertility and menstrual disorders.
- To work with the SSWHG to improve access to tertiary services which streamline patient journeys.
- To further strengthen links between Waterford and Cork including exploring possibility of registrar rotations.
- To see the 4th consultant in post which will ensure the ongoing developments in the unit.
- To investigate the possibility of post CSCST trainees working as consultants in STGH under the new project proposed by the Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.
- To supervise the specialist services like bereavement, social work, perinatal mental health, diabetic midwife specialist, develop their individual services and improve quality of services provided.

Can you give us three things on your 'bucket list'?

- Sky dive
- See the Himalayas
- Learn to play the piano



Dr Paul Hughes

Clinical Lead Obstetrics & Gynaecology
University Hospital Hospital Kerry
Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate

Previous positions with this hospital

I have previously been Chair of the Medical Board in UHK, as well as Consultant rep on the Blood Transfusion and theatre governance committees. I have been a member of the Institute of Obstetrics & Gynaecology Executive Council for eight years and for the last two years have also been Chair of the Hospital Inspection committee. I was Treasurer of the Continence Foundation of Ireland for 10 years and was a member of the Clinical Review Team investigation into maternity services in Portiuncula Hospital.

I am delighted to formally take on the role as Clinical Lead for Obstetrics & Gynaecology in UHK as a part of the Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate alongside being Clinical Lecturer in the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology in UCC.

Key role responsibilities

I see my key role as UHK Clinical Lead as a liaison with the other three units in the group via the fortnightly EMC meetings. This allows me to communicate local UHK issues and concerns to the group as well as to disseminate information from the group to all the multidisciplinary members of the team here in UHK. I think it is vital that every member of our department feels that they can approach me directly or via email if they have any thoughts/suggestions or concerns so that I can help them address any issues locally and maintain and improve our services to the women of Kerry.

What is your key focus over the next 3-6 months?

Over the next 6 months, I think that we need to continue to support our staff whilst dealing with the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Hopefully, if the current situation continues to stabilise and to improve, we will then need to look at how we can safely restart those services that are currently on hold. Almost every aspect of how we did things in the past is likely to be altered for quite some time to come. Whilst virtual clinics will certainly continue, we also need to look at how and where we assess what face-to-face interactions need to happen. That future service is ours to determine.

Can you give us three things on your 'bucket list'?

- I walked part of the Camino for a week a number of years ago and I would like to go back to do all of it at some stage.
- I have two grandchildren in Cork and two in Perth and I am hoping to see more over them face-to-face in times to come.
- I would also like to do an Art History course at some in the future, if and when time allows.



Dr Brendan Murphy

Clinical Lead, Neonatology,
Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate

Previous positions with this hospital

I have been Consultant Neonatologist in Cork for 18 years now, since April 2002 and am very proud of the journey our maternity service has taken clinically and academically over those years. I was Clinical Lead, Neonatology in Unified Maternity & Neonatology Services from 2002-2007 as we worked towards building and commissioning CUMH and subsequently was Clinical Lead Neonatology in CUMH after it opened for 2007 and 2008.

Key role responsibilities

In addition to my Consultant Neonatologist responsibilities, as Clinical Lead, Neonatology, I represent all of the members of the healthcare team within the Neonatology Service across the Directorate. My aim is to promote collaboration across our four hospitals to foster this unified single team across our academic healthcare network.

What is your key focus over the next 3-6 months?

Without sounding too earnest, I firmly believe that it is the people within our diverse healthcare team that are its most valuable asset. By supporting all members of the team, by treating each and every one of them with respect, harnessing their expertise and enthusiasm, through digitally sharing our guidelines, education and training across our network and

ultimately by having a single electronic health record across our four hospitals, we can promote better delivery of healthcare for all mothers, newborns and their families across our region.

Can you give us three things on your 'bucket list'?

Realising that I've been working in this post for 18 years now, perhaps I had better get on with some of these aspirations on my bucket list sooner rather than later! Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass, but rather learning to dance in the rain!

- I have really enjoyed walking some of the Camino de Santiago and hope to continue walking other sections of this ancient pilgrim pathway as and when I can in the years to come, perhaps managing to complete it in its entirety in due course.
- As well as walking the Camino, boring as it may sound, I've recently returned to 'ruining a good walk' by playing golf. One of my closest friends (now based in US) and I have spoken about trying to play a round on the old course at St Andrew's. Imagine getting anywhere close to par at the home of golf!
- The idea of a long and sunny road trip down the Pacific Coast Highway of California in the sunshine in open top convertible over several weeks remains an elusive dream that my wife and I may eventually realise some day!



Dr Mairead O'Riordan

Clinical Lead, Quality and Safety
Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate

Title of new position

Clinical Lead, Quality and Safety

Previous positions with this hospital

I'm a UCC graduate. I did my undergraduate clinical placement in the Erinville and that experience (combined with an attachment in Zimbabwe) inspired me to do Obstetrics and Gynaecology. I did my initial post graduate training in Dublin and returned to the Erinville as an SPR. This was an interesting time it was a period where there were huge changes as we worked to integrate the Erinville, St Finbarr's and Cork University Hospital to a Unified Service. I also got the opportunity to work with the team designing the CUMH. I completed my training in Dublin and New Zealand and returned in 2009 as a Consultant/Senior Lecturer in Obstetrics and Gynaecology in CUMH/UCC.

Key role responsibilities

As a clinician I have always been cognisant of the importance of good governance within hospitals and the need for a firm focus on both the quality of care as well as the safety of the service. I am committed to providing women and their families with both safe care,

a good service and where possible, a good experience while providing an environment for positive patient engagement. My new role as Clinical Lead, Quality and Safety for the Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate is to work across the four maternity hospitals/units to provide the framework and supports to ensure a comprehensive quality and safety programme.

What is your key focus over the next 3-6 months?

My current focus is to engage with the other hospitals and services in Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate, to work collaboratively with them, to co-develop quality improvement plans when needed and to provide standardisation of care across our services.

Can you give us three things on your 'bucket list'?

I have had a very full and enjoyable life up to now and actually I am fairly content (or very boring) so I don't have a bucket list.



Ms Orfhlaith O'Sullivan

Clinical Lead, Gynaecology
Ireland South Women
& Infants Directorate

Title of new position

Clinical Lead Gynaecology, Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate

Previous positions with this hospital

I first came to Cork in 2005 as a Urology Registrar, however in 2006, I made my decision to switch to Obstetrics & Gynaecology. This was due in part to an interest in the procedures I saw on the Urogynaecology theatre list and the collegial spirit I witnessed daily. The switch involved me becoming a first year SHO in Obstetrics & Gynaecology in Galway. I returned to Cork for a year in 2010 as a first year SPR, returning July 2014 to be the first EUGA/EBCOG Fellow in Urogynaecology in Cork University Maternity Hospital. Once I finished my SPR training scheme in I remained in Cork as a Consultant in Jan 2017.

Key role responsibilities

As Clinical Lead, I oversee gynaecology services across Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate and seek to identify areas where improvements can be made to ensure patient safety and to enhance both the patient and staff experience.

What is your key focus over the next 3-6 months?

Currently the focus is on providing safe services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Once we come out the other end, my focus will return to the gynaecology waiting list management. I want to ensure the hard work done in previous years, reducing the outpatient gynaecology waiting list from over 4,700 to under 1,000, is not only appreciated but also maintained for the benefit and safety of our patients.

Can you give us three things on your 'bucket list'?

- I would like to go and see the Annapurna massif in the Himalayas – technically it is one of the most difficult mountains in the world to climb. It is of significant interest to me as my family home derives its name from it.
- I must visit the Skeleton Coast in Namibia one day – it is meant to be magnificent, and harbours the remains of many shipwrecks due to the treacherous ocean fog which is present most of the year. The Namibian bushmen call it 'The land God made in anger'.
- I'm planning on returning to the piano, which I learned as a young teenager. I actually bought a piano with my first paycheck!



Dr Karen McNamara

Clinical Lead, Policies,
Procedures & Guidelines
Ireland South Women
& Infants Directorate

Previous positions with this hospital

I joined Cork University Maternity Hospital in 2008 and spent 2009 as a first year SHO. In 2010 I worked as a Junior Registrar while also doing a MSc in Obstetrics & Gynaecology. I returned in 2014 as a Senior Registrar and studied for my PhD from 2015 to 2018. I then worked as an SPR from July 2018 til January 2019 and have been a Consultant since January 2019.

Key role responsibilities

I'm delighted to take on this position as Clinical Lead, Policies, Procedures & Guidelines. As the lead of the PPG Committee, my responsibility is to continuously improve the quality of healthcare within and across the four sites in Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate.

What is your key focus over the next 3-6 months?

I'm keen to streamline and expedite the creation of Policies, Procedures & Guidelines (PPGs) across our Directorate, avoiding duplication and centralising efforts.

A key longer term aim is to achieve JCI (Joint Commission International) accreditation for all of our four hospitals.

Can you give us three things on your 'bucket list'?

- While I've done quite a few things on my bucket list already, I do still have a few left:
- Taking a year off work and travelling the world is something I have always wanted to do (not for a few years yet though!)
 - As I love to cook and entertain, entering the Masterchef Australia would be a dream goal (the Australian version as that one is run the best).
 - Given that my travel plans are cancelled for a while, I am keen to sail down the Shannon this summer, and explore our beautiful countryside.

Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Services

by Dr Deirdre Muller Neff,
Consultant Perinatal Psychiatrist,
Cork University Maternity Hospital



Perinatal mental health disorders are those that occur during pregnancy and up to one year post delivery. Perinatal mental health disorders can occur for the first time during pregnancy or may be due to a relapse of a pre-existing illness such as bipolar disorder.

There are a wide range of disorders that occur on a spectrum in terms of severity. Adjustment disorders, together with mild to moderate depressive and anxiety disorders, are probably the most commonly encountered perinatal mental health issues.

The perinatal period is a time of both physical and mental change for women and while the physical impacts are often recognised and discussed, emotional changes may be forgotten or given less attention.

Perinatal mental disorders can have an adverse effect on the pregnancy,

the mother-baby dyad and the family as well as the infant's developmental trajectory. The provision of a specialist service that provides prompt assessment and intervention as needed is key in ensuring perinatal mental health issues are detected and managed effectively to reduce this adverse impact.

Since my first interview for UltraNews in February 2019, the team has expanded with the addition of Breda Bird, Perinatal Mental Health Midwife, Anne O'Flynn, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Noelle Harris Senior Mental Health Social Worker and Evan O'Mahoney administrative support. We will also shortly be welcoming our second Clinical Nurse Specialist Rachel O'Donoghue in early June.

Our team is committed to providing a timely, efficient, effective and integrated specialist mental health service, embedded in the maternity. Our aim is to provide education and develop a network



across the directorate as we become more established in order to increase awareness of perinatal mental health issues and promote parity of esteem between mental and physical health in line with the National Model of Care and the National Maternity Strategy.

Pictured above: Noelle Harris Senior Mental Health Social Worker; Breda Bird, Perinatal Mental Health Midwife; Evan O'Mahoney administrative support; Anne O'Flynn, Clinical Nurse Specialist and Deirdre Muller Neff, Consultant Perinatal Psychiatrist, CUMH. Missing from photo: Rachel O'Donoghue, Clinical Nurse Specialist

SPMHS APP
HSE National Programme for Specialist Perinatal Mental Health

- ✓ How to contact PMH Teams
- ✓ Additional PMH information
- ✓ Leaflets for Patients & much more...

To Access the Perinatal Mental Health Service App:
1. Scan the QR Code below OR enter the URL <https://PMH.HealthCareStaff.App> in your browser (Not App Stores)
2. Click "Add To Homescreen" & complete sign in

For Healthcare Staff
Not Patient Facing

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5 May 2020: International Day of the Midwife

We celebrated International Day of the Midwife in many ways across Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate on 5 May 2020. This day is a great opportunity to acknowledge and thank our midwives and raise the profile of the profession. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is also an opportunity to say how exceptionally proud we are of the way maternity teams have risen to this unprecedented challenge, adapting services and adopting new technology to ensure that mums and babies continue to receive quality care.

To shine a light on midwives and reassure patients, we launched a video on Twitter on International Day of the Midwife featuring two midwives from each of our maternity hospitals/units in Cork, Kerry, Waterford and Tipperary, answering frequently asked questions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To celebrate the profession in CUMH, we organised for midwives to write on a card what being a midwife means to them for a photo shoot. These were then compiled into a photo montage along with photos of colleagues from our other units, and shared with staff via YouTube. The cards themselves were hung on display for patients and staff to view.

A video montage was also created featuring CUMH midwives talking about what being a midwife means to them. This was shared via YouTube and on Twitter, to celebrate the profession.

In a survey carried out in early 2020, promoting the midwifery profession in national and local press was one of the top actions voted. As a result, we organised a feature in the Examiner featuring midwives from across our maternity units in Ireland South. See below.

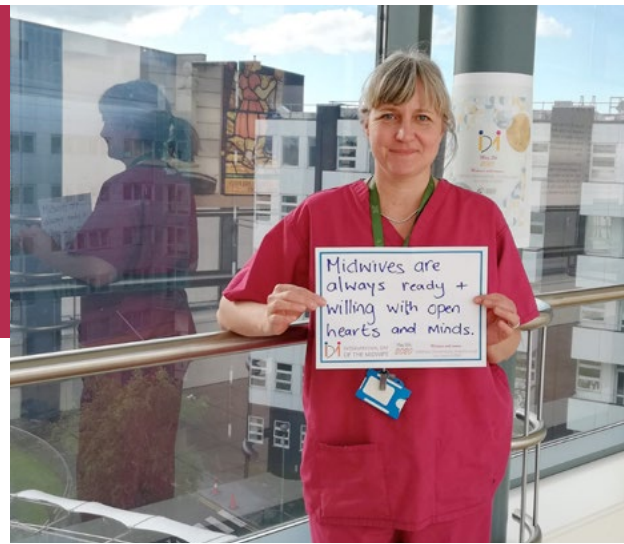
Pictured right: International Day of the Midwife; Midwives holding signs showing what they love about their job

Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate @IrelandSout... · May 5
 Happy International Day of the Midwife! 2020 is also the International Year of the Midwife and the Nurse. To celebrate we asked our midwives, what being a midwife really means to them. They are truly amazing! #IDM2020 #InternationalDayoftheMidwife #YearOfTheNurseAndMidwife



0:45 2K views 2 22 58





Frontline Workers: 'We work through storms, Christmas, everything, 24/7 so a pandemic is no different'

by Liz Dunphy, in the Examiner, 4 May 2020

"As a midwife, you experience evolution right in front of your eyes, helping someone make that transition to parenthood," said Kate Lyons, Midwife Manager at the Labour Ward in Cork University Maternity Hospital.

The coronavirus pandemic has impacted maternity wards nationally, separating pregnant women and newly delivered babies from their families but Ms Lyons said that midwives are still there to 'hold women's hands' through it all.

"We work through storms, Christmas, everything, 24/7 so a pandemic is no different. We'll be there for women and their babies. And you can't deliver a baby from the other side of the room. We're holding the woman's hand, helping her breathe through contractions. We're highly trained and we learn to know what a woman is saying without her having to use words."

Tomorrow, May 5 marks International Day of the Midwife in what it is the Year of the Nurse and Midwife. "It makes me so proud as a midwife to see my colleagues so dedicated, taking personal risks to help others," Ms Lyons said.

CUMH has had no confirmed cases of COVID-19 so far, but before anyone enters the hospital they are checked for symptoms and a temperature, and any suspected cases are brought to a specific area of the hospital where they can isolate. Partners are discouraged from attending hospital until the mother is in active labour and must leave after the baby is born.

"To maximise the quality of time for dads, we encourage them to have skin-to-skin contact and to take pictures and video of the baby and audio of their heart beat before they go," Ms Lyons said.

"The day of discharge is incredibly emotional. Handing the baby and mother back to the partner, watching them hug and the partner look into the baby's face and take ownership."

Post-pandemic, she hopes to see more midwife-led care and more choice of care for women.

"I'd like to see the midwife's role developed to its full potential. We're autonomous and highly trained. We can deliver a baby, suture, insert an IV line, provide life-saving medication and recognise the need for an obstetrician. Most pregnancies are straight-forward and don't need to be medicalised. A woman's body knows what to do. We try to make women feel empowered by the process."

The word 'midwife' means 'with woman' and never have midwives been with women more than now, said Norma Kissane, Clinical Midwife Manager at University Hospital Kerry.

"We're there, guiding them through everything, helping and supporting them," Ms Kissane said. "There's a lot of compassion and passion in what we do. We're changing the world one family at a time."

University Hospital Kerry is part of the Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate, a network of maternity hospitals led by CUMH which aims to share information and promote ever-greater care. The pandemic may lead to some post-Covid changes with more low-risk patients being seen outside the hospital and with more early discharges so that women could go home six hours after a vaginal birth and 42 hours after a caesarean section, Ms Kissane said.

Linda O'Callaghan Clinical Placement Coordinator (Midwifery) at University Hospital Waterford said that the pandemic has also impacted training for student midwives.

"First, second and third year placements were pulled when college came to an end," she said. "All that's left is the fourth year interns. It will delay career progression."

Some students' clinical placements have been cancelled and they can't graduate without them. Everything is very fluid but I'm there to reassure the fourth years."

Ms O'Callaghan said that students are now being taught about wellbeing and stress management to help them cope through these trying times.

"I've never seen the amount of stress in my career as in the last eight weeks," she said. "COVID-19 is part of life now. It is changing the face of healthcare. Our students will tell this story to their grandchildren. It's the equivalent of their war."



Above: Norma Kissane, Clinical Midwife Manager, University Hospital Kerry

5 May 2020: International Day of the Midwife in UHK

by Sandra O'Connor, Director of Midwifery



University Hospital Kerry (UHK) Maternity Services, like many other maternity hospitals across the country, joined in the celebrations on May 5 2020, to celebrate International Day of the Midwife and to thank and recognise the midwife. The theme for 2020 is 'midwives with women: demonstrate, mobilise, unite - our time is NOW!'

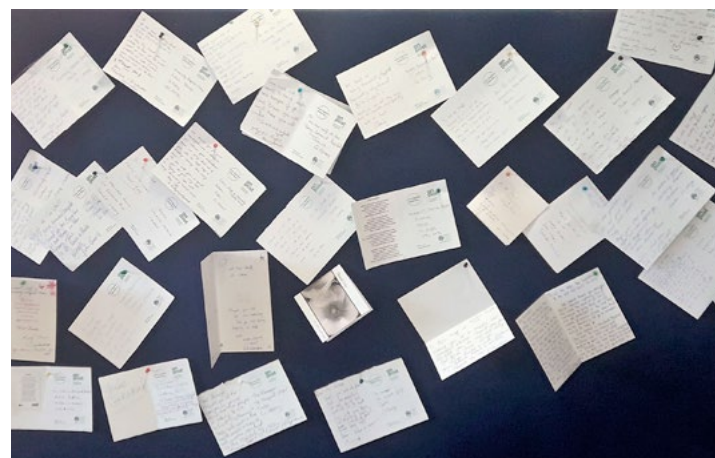
UHK maternity has 1,200 births per annum, and on International Day of the Midwife, all newborn babies received a certificate signed by their midwife, depicting the special day on which they were born. Babies in the neonatal unit and the postnatal ward too received a certificate signed by their midwife or nurse. Each baby was also given a gift of a baby blanket.

Midwives Norma Kissane and Joann Malik spoke on Kerry radio about the evolving role of midwifery, pregnant women preparing for birth in the COVID-19 crisis and the International Day of the Midwife itself.

Staff midwives also created a 'Lean on me' video for the UHK website, Facebook and Twitter accounts, outlining how the midwifery role of support is now more important than ever for women and their families in the current challenging environment - these received very positive feedback from the Kerry community with hundreds of likes and over 160 comments to date!

Community support was very much evident and appreciated through the many thank you messages received.

Above: Selection of images of midwives from UHK on International Day of the Midwife



Above: Pastries were generously donated by Leahy's Pharmacy to the staff midwives and nurses of the UHK Maternity Services

Above: Some of the many thank you messages received by UHK

Above: Midwifery staff with mothers Catherine and Helen holding their baby girls in their new blankets gifted on International Day of the Midwife

International Day of the Midwife: STGH

by Sinéad Heaney, Director of Midwifery

We celebrated International Day of the Midwife in STGH on 5 May as we usually do, with small tokens given to both staff and patients to acknowledge the day. I was very proud of my daughter Ella, who captured the spirit of the day beautifully with her lovely drawings.

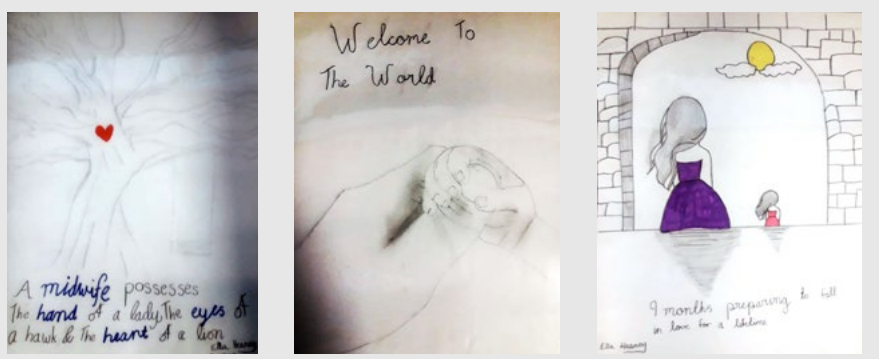
Thank you to all the amazing midwives in Ireland South, and especially the ones I work with daily in STGH for your resourcefulness and adaptability in the face of COVID-19 to ensure that mums and babies continue to receive the same great care as they always have, in the safest possible way.



Above: Lizette Gouws and Rachel Spearman, Staff Midwives; Carmel Byrne, Lactation Consultant and Sinéad Heaney, Director of Midwifery on International Day of the Midwife with their small gift to acknowledge the day



Above: Janice O'Donoghue CMM 2 Perinatal Mental Health and Andrea Duffy, staff midwife -Sonographer receiving their gift on International Day of the Midwife from midwifery management



Left: Pictures drawn by Ella Heaney, age 12, for the midwives and mothers in STGH on International Day of the Midwife 5 May 2020



Above: Sandra O'Connor DOM, Mary Stack Courtney CMM3, Martina O'Sullivan-D'Arcy, Marielle Mendez, Màirèad O'Sullivan, Carrie Dillion, Marie Nolan, Rogan Legaspi, Breda Nolan and Frances O'Halloran



Above: Neonatal Consultant, Dr Daniel Onyekwere; Mum Aoife Healy with baby Ogie; Margaret Kelly CMM1, Sandhya Surendran and Vicki Sheehy

12 May 2020: International Day of the Nurse in UHK

By Màirèad O'Sullivan, Staff Nurse Emly Ward, UHK

As a Neonatal Nurse and Lactation Consultant in University Hospital Kerry (UHK), celebrating International Nurses Day with colleagues gives me extreme pride to be part of such a fantastic team.

Maternity services celebrated the day with a tea party provided by Sandra O'Connor, Director of Midwifery. Staff nurses from UHK Neonatal Unit, the gynaecology ward and other maternity services came together in the afternoon. It was extremely enjoyable with all staff nurses and midwives discussing their journeys to date and reflecting back on their training both internationally and nationally.

Breda Nolan, Frances O'Hallaron, Maire Nolan, Mary-Jane Cajoui and Màirèad O'Sullivan all spoke about their nursing roles within maternity services, and these interviews are available on the UHK Twitter account @hospital_kerry.

The Emly Ward in UHK Neonatal Unit had an extra cause for celebration as their nurses and doctors launched the vCreate IT system enabling parents, and especially dads, to get up-to-date images and alerts on their infant's daily progress.

12 May 2020: International Day of the Nurse in CUMH



Above: Front row: Meilin Olunan, Nurse; Louie Galagnara, Nurse; Mary Prince A/ Clinical Nurse Manager 2; Backrow: Mary Anne Masongsong, Nurse; Alphons Joseph, Nurse; Lorraine O'Connor Clinical Nurse Manager 3; Elaine Twomey, Nurse/ Midwife; Katie Bourke, Director of Nursing and Midwifery; AJ Dominguez, Nurse; Sheeba Rajan, Nurse; Deirdre Bateman Nurse/Midwife; Shiela Guansing, Nurse



Above: Mary Prince, ACNM2 Theatres and Joanne Angland, Theatre Nurse



Above: Richard Masongsong and Ambili Jacob, Theatre Nurses, CUMH

Mary Prince, ACNM2 Theatres, CUMH

On 12 May, International Day of the Nurse, it's time to reflect and think "Would I change anything about my nursing/midwifery career? Why should we celebrate?"

The friends I trained with remain friends to this day and are more like sisters. I started my general theatre experience early on and was a little green around the gills. It was the support and mentoring of the senior nurses that encouraged me to stay the course. A few still stand out in my mind today. After many years, I became the senior nurse - a little weight on my shoulders for sure. A few more years passed and it was time to look for a new challenge. Working in the Cork University Hospital (CUMH) theatres has been an experience filled with learning, teamwork, support, superb colleagues and new friends. In short, I wouldn't change a thing. I salute the amazing nurses I have the pleasure of working with every day in this very challenging, but rewarding service.

Joanne Angland, Theatre Nurse, CUMH

My name is Joanne Angland I work as a staff nurse in CUMH in the operating theatre department. As I am based in a dedicated women's hospital, I meet women in various stages of their life as we offer both obstetric and gynaecological services. CUMH is a teaching hospital and attracts professionals from around the world. My work colleagues may come

from different countries but we all have lots in common – and that is our aim for a high standard of healthcare for women and our love of good food!

I look forward to going to work each day – long may it continue!

Ambili Jacob, Theatre Nurse, CUMH

As a theatre nurse in CUMH, it is a blessing to be the right hand of the surgeon, helping out in the process of saving lives and bringing lives into the world. With due respect, effective communication, compassionate listening, and educating parents as to the procedure, I ensure both mother and baby get a high standard of care. It is equally important to make parents feel safe and give them psychological and emotional support. I am passionate about my profession and love every moment of it.

I truly feel blessed as a scrub nurse working with such a fantastic team in CUMH.

Richard Masongsong, Theatre Nurse, CUMH

Working in the CUMH Theatre for a couple of years, one might assume that I am well-prepared for whatever comes through our door, be it elective or emergency cases, but honestly, I never get used to it! Patients are all different; I feel that giving an individualized approach to care reassures them more and helps form trust between us. Every time a pregnant woman enters



our theatre, two lives are already entrusted to you and this fact causes me fear. However, this daunting feeling is also the same reason why one should never be complacent in our profession. This encourages me to be better, more caring nurse, mindful to treat every woman and her unborn child as an individual and not just another name on the list.

Olga O'Brien ACMM2, Delivery Suite CUMH

Nursing and midwifery are my two passions. As science and medicine have advanced over the last ten years, womens' choices have made the near impossible, possible. Women with underlying cardiac issues, or complex pre-existing medical conditions are now planning pregnancies and their care needs are anything but low risk.

Working in the CUMH high dependency unit often requires a collaboration of care between the multidisciplinary teams and a depth of understanding of both nursing and midwifery. We are in a privileged position of working closely between theatre, delivery suite and the neonatal unit. The skillfull nurse and the savvy midwife ensure families get holistic care and continuity of care and caregiver. The aim in the care of the criticality ill woman is to support her physically, emotionally and spiritually - we want to reduce morbidity.

The care we give partners at this time can never be captured in careplans, it really is holistic, family centred care. The International Day of the Nurse and that of the Midwife gives us a day to acknowledge the work of nurses and midwives but also a chance to plan for the next generation of women who will no doubt keep pushing the boundaries of what is possible in order to achieve a family.

The development of the Maternal Critical Care Program in UCC is a great local resource which brings the best of nursing and midwifery together for anyone who would be interested in this rewarding area - it commences in the Autumn.

Never in my lifetime did I think I would care for a first time mother who had a history of having a renal transplant. The satisfaction of helping her and witnessing the joy from a granny who thought that day would never be possible is one of the highlights of last year, and I look forward to what lies ahead.



Above: Lorraine O'Connor, Clinical Nurse Manager 3; Katie Bourke, Director of Midwifery; Judy Geraghty, Nurse/Midwife; Annmarie Murtagh, Nurse/Midwife; Olga O'Brien, Nurse/Midwife and Alice Sheehy, Nurse/Midwife

Left: Sheilla Guansing, Nurse; Annmarie Murrtagh, Nurse/Midwife; Clíodhna O'Sullivan, Midwife; Norma English Nurse/Midwife; Máiréad O'Reilly Nurse/Domino Midwife; Claire Cronin, Midwife; Aoife Buckley, Midwife; Siobhan Kennedy, Healthcare Assistant; Kathleen Lynch, Household Staff; centre Olga O'Brien Nurse/Midwife



COVID-19 Resource Centre

Dr Keelin O'Donoghue, Consultant Obstetrician & Gynaecologist and Principal Investigator, INFANT is one of three researchers who have created and are curating the BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology COVID-19 Resource Centre. The team are collecting useful and credible links to selected guidelines, registries, primary sources, systematic reviews and websites.

https://obgyn.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/hub/journal/14710528/COVID-19_resource_centre



Clinical guidance on COVID-19 and maternity practice



The Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (IOG), the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI), the National Women and Infant's Health Programme (NWIHP) and the HSE issued guidance on COVID-19 and maternity services in early April. Dr Keelin O'Donoghue is lead author for the IOG/RCPI and HSE/NWIHP on this new clinical guidance on COVID-19 in pregnancy.



Dr O'Donoghue worked with Joye McKernan (NPEC, UCC, Cork) to lead a national group of contributors including midwifery, chaplaincy and medical colleagues from CUMH and CUH, as well as contributors from the Rotunda Hospital and the Coombe Women and Infants University Hospital.

This guidance document for maternity services outlines considerations for care for pregnant women and their infants during the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides advice for maternity units around the provision of safe care to women and infants with suspected / confirmed COVID-19. Since its initial publication it has been updated four times and is published on many national websites, being widely endorsed by professional colleges and health services bodies.

This guidance document aims to:

- To outline considerations for care for pregnant women and their infants during the COVID-19 pandemic
- To advise maternity units around the provision of safe care to women and infants with suspected / confirmed COVID-19
- To support healthcare staff working in the maternity services
- To set out a framework for managing the impact on maternity services
- To provide principles to help units develop their own response plans.

This document is available via the link below and is updated as new information and evidence emerges.

www.rcpi.ie/news/releases/the-institute-of-obstetricians-and-gynaecologists-issues-guidance-on-COVID-19-and-maternity-services/

Funding for technology to reduce hospital visits for pregnant women during COVID-19



Research led by Dr Fergus McCarthy, Consultant Obstetrician and Senior Lecturer, Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology and colleagues at the INFANT Research Centre have been awarded €118,877 in SFI funding in June 2020. The research is for a pilot project that aims to reduce the number of hospital check-up visits for pregnant women during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study at Cork University Maternity Hospital will use remote technology to monitor blood pressure in pregnant women during the coronavirus pandemic, including inpatients and outpatients and Covid-positive and Covid-negative mothers.

If a pregnant woman's blood pressure is too high for too long and left uncontrolled, it can affect the baby's growth and may be a sign of a potentially life-threatening condition called pre-eclampsia.

In some cases, women with suspected high blood pressure may need to present at the hospital for extra check-ups as well as their routine consultations - something made more difficult during the current public health emergency.

Some 500 pregnant women in the project will use an automated device connected to the INFANT Research Centre's LEANBH

platform to measure their blood pressure and relay the results to the clinical team. The mothers can then be alerted if their care needs to change. The result should mean fewer mothers needing to personally attend outpatients in Cork University Maternity Hospital for blood-pressure monitoring. It will also allow closer monitoring of blood pressure in pregnancy than is currently the case.

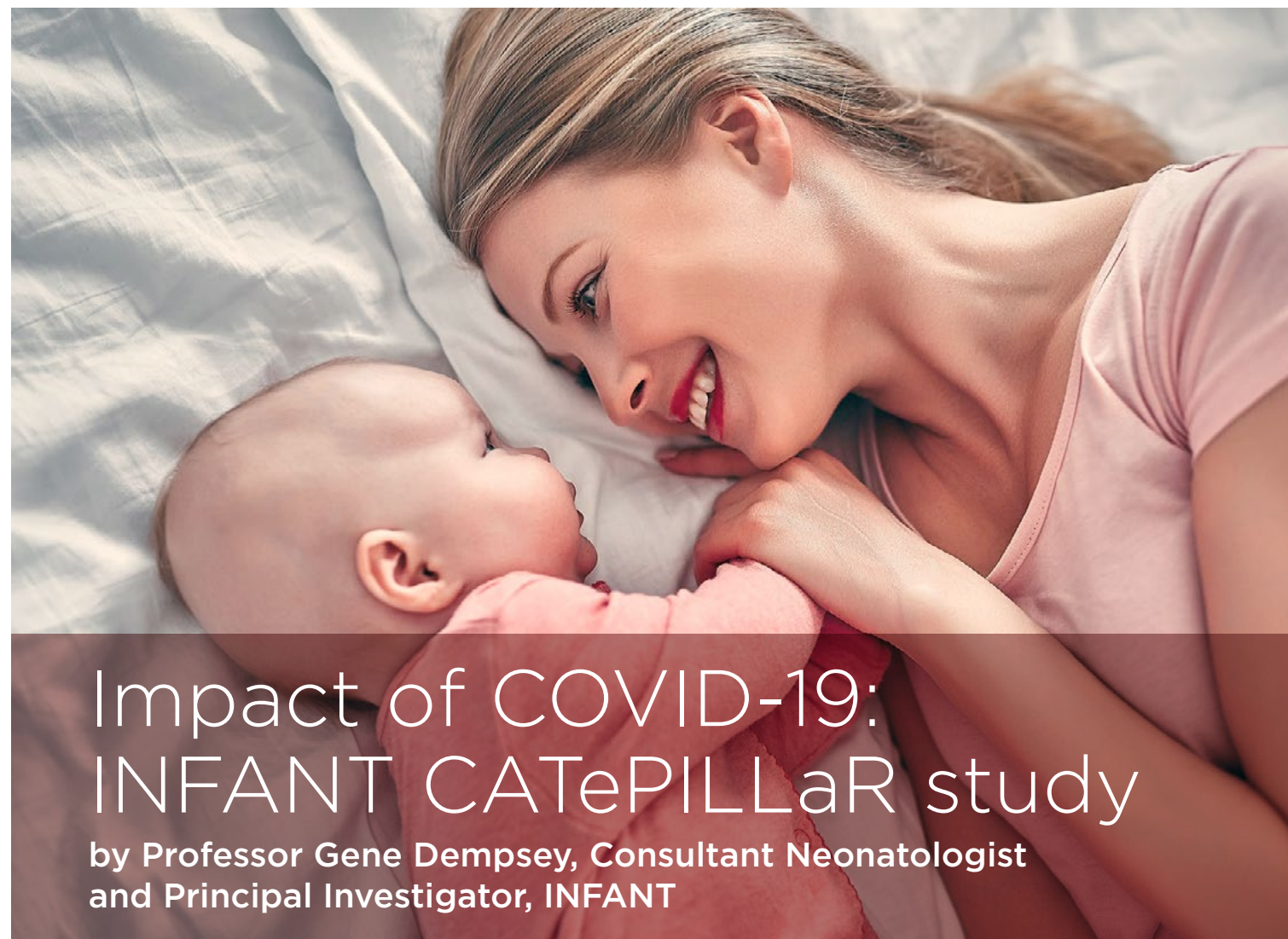
Dr McCarthy said: *"This is a fantastic opportunity to improve our care for pregnant women by offering them safe, accurate and convenient monitoring of their blood pressure in pregnancy in the comfort of their homes with results monitored by an in-house team of midwives and doctors. There is huge potential to extend this project nationally, and relook at how we offer care to all our pregnant women to ensure they have as safe a pregnancy as possible."*

Teams used for COVID-19 information hub for staff

by Joye McKernan,
Researcher, NPEC

The Local Information Governance Group (LIGG) were asked by the Executive Management Committee to collate COVID-19 information for staff. Acting Chair Dr Keelin O'Donoghue and LIGG member Joye McKernan compiled a rich resource of international guidelines, publications, HSE information, memos and infographics.

Microsoft Teams was used as the platform to share the information and over 50 staff have engaged with it. This is an important resource to ensure that staff have up to date, verified and reliable information. We are still welcoming members and if anyone wishes to join please contact joye.mckernan@ucc.ie for further information.



The INFANT Research Centre is starting a new study at Cork University Maternity Hospital to learn more about the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on mother & baby's health and wellbeing. Parents of full-term newborns who have delivered or are about to deliver at CUMH during the COVID-19 pandemic will be approached to participate in a longitudinal study of parental and infant health in the COVID-19 era. Restrictions were placed on antenatal and postnatal hospital visits, inpatient hospital visiting and community follow up care. Very little research has been done on the effects that COVID-19 and the necessary restrictions

may have on the wellbeing of parents and infants. We are exploring both the positive and negative impacts COVID-19 restrictions have had on pregnancy, childbirth and subsequent follow up care of infants during COVID-19 in the CATEPILLaR study. The multidisciplinary team includes experts in neonatology, obstetrics, midwifery, nutrition, paediatrics and psychology. Recruitment will commence shortly.



INFANT COVID-19 Hub

by Caoimhe Byrne,
Marketing and Communications

INFANT Research Centre has created a dedicated COVID-19 Hub for families, researchers and healthcare professionals to collate all the emerging scientific literature and clinical guidelines that relate to COVID-19 during pregnancy, birth, newborns and early childhood.

We acknowledge the tremendous efforts of INFANT and HSE colleagues in the health service and the generous support of corporate and individual donors who have helped fund some of our COVID-19 response to date.

We welcome any other donations or supports that can help us through research, public and patient involvement, and clinical practice. Please contact us at infantcovidresponse@ucc.ie if you wish to help, seek information, or discuss opportunities to collaborate.



Examining final year medical students during a Pandemic

by Louise Riordan, Manager Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, UCC



Pictured above: Ann O'Donovan, Undergraduate Coordinator; Ruth Devenney, Postgraduate Coordinator; Louise Riordan, Manager Dept of Obstetrics and Gynaecology

The Final Medical Examinations in Obstetrics and Gynaecology were due to take place on the week commencing 27 April 2020, with practical clinical exams to take place over four days in CUMH, UHK, STGH and UHW. However, on 6pm Thursday 12 March, all schools and universities were forced to shut their doors as part of national measures to slow the spread of the coronavirus. Students were no longer allowed access to hospitals and patients were not allowed visitors.

Over the following week and days, the arrangements for these exams were discussed and on the 16 March, it was eventually decided that students would start their Final Med Exams on Friday 20 March, continue over the weekend and conclude on Tuesday 24 March 2020. This meant the Obstetrics and Gynaecology exams would now take place over one day (on Saturday 21 March) rather than

the usual four, in conjunction with Paediatrics. The decision to move the exams forward was based on a number of factors and included the indications that the healthcare system could be overloaded in a few weeks' time due to a surge of COVID-19 cases and the healthcare system might need these new graduates earlier than usual.

Due to the practical nature of the exam and the volume of students to examine, an online assessment was not feasible. The exam (incorporating clinical discussion and written questions) would take the form of an OSCE exam (an objective structured clinical examination) held in one day, with various stations set up for the students in the Brookfield Health Science Complex (BHSC). Obviously, there could be no patients involved this year. Consultants and junior doctors were contacted immediately to request their assistance as Examiners for the Final Med OSCE's outlining the changes from previous years.

OSCE exam

OSCE exam questions were prepared by Dr Rebecca Cole and overseen by Dr Mairead O'Riordan and Professor John R. Higgins with support from our external examiner Professor Shaun Brennecke (University of Melbourne). There were 8 'stations' with time allocated per station of 7.5 mins and over 200 final med students were due to take part. Timing was critical!

Social distancing and precautions taken

Due to the virulent nature of the COVID-19 virus, strict precautions were put in place in Brookfield on the exam day. These included the provision of hand sanitiser, gloves, facemasks and social distancing measures. There were 16 examiners conducting the exam for Obs & Gynae. The attending students were split up into groups of four and allocated a specific attendance time. They were then held in two lecture rooms until they were called to attend the

exam. Candidates were then brought directly to the exam room by staff and met with the invigilators who briefed them. Once the exam was completed, they took the usual precautions i.e. sanitising hands and after signing out, they left the building.

The UCC Medicine Class of 2020 all graduated virtually on April 17 2020 and were offered internships in the Irish health system. Those that accepted started on May 25 2020.

In contrast, the remaining teaching and examining for our fourth year medical students and our Masters students were held online – including teaching, presentations and OSCEs. The flexibility shown by our clinical teaching and administrative staff alongside the support from the School of Medicine and College of Medicine and Health was tremendous.

We wish our new graduates the best of luck in their future careers and look forward to welcoming back the students in the new academic year. How that will look considering COVID-19 restrictions will be determined over the summer.



CME: Ensuring staff have the right COVID-19 skillset

By Annette Keating, Midwife Teacher, CME



Pictured above: Annette Keating, Midwife Teacher CME delivers a COVID-19 education programme

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic declared on the 11 March 2020, a suite of multidisciplinary education programmes were provided in the Centre of Midwifery Education (CME) CUMH in relation to COVID-19, specifically the prevention of transmission, detection and management of the disease.

Invaluable teaching resources from international, national and local health agencies were designed into local programmes. These health agencies included the WHO, the European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC), the Health Service Executive (HSE) and Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC). In addition, the HSE National Health Library and Knowledge Service (NHLKS) provided clinical guidance documents for the various health streams. Finally, a suite of HSE E-learning COVID-19 programmes were available on HSEland and included a valuable UK National Health Service (NHS) programme entitled: Respiratory Care E-learning module.

The CME multidisciplinary education and training programmes rolled out from February 2020 to the present time focus on four key areas:

1. COVID-19 mode of transmission, detection and management of symptoms
2. Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) to include hand hygiene, standard precaution and the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
3. Respiratory and pharmacological support and the management of a patient with severe symptoms of COVID-19
4. Monitoring the deteriorating patient using the Irish Maternity Early Warning System (IMEWS) and the National Early Warning Score (NEWS) to include the management of a patient with sepsis, anaphylaxis and requiring maternal resuscitation.

Teaching methods include small group presentations in the classroom and on-site training including practice drills in relation to the donning and doffing of PPE. In addition, visual demonstrations on the use of respiratory and cardiac medical devices such as the Airvo 2 humidifier and the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) are used.

The roll out of the COVID-19 education programmes ensure all staff in CUMH have an up-to-date, COVID-19 skill set focussed on the detection, prevention of transmission and management of the disease.

In the words of Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the WHO:
"...Dark and difficult days lie ahead, but guided by science, we will overcome..."
 Cheng, M., Irish Examiner, 20/5/2020

COVID-19 Education by the CME

by Cathy O’Sullivan, Director Centre of Midwifery Education

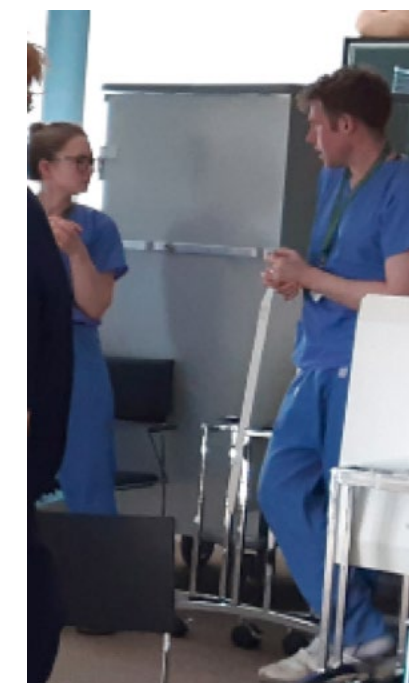
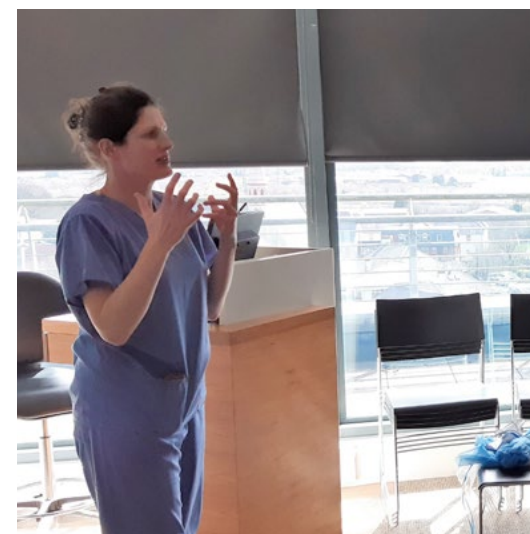
The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the widespread disruption to continuing professional education for midwives, nurses and the multidisciplinary team provided by the Centre of Midwifery Education (CME) in CUMH. New COVID-19 specific programmes were developed in the CME in response to the pandemic. These, in addition to some of our long standing programmes like Anaphylaxis, BLS and IMEWS, will be central to our work for some time. Changes that have been made in the CME include measures to ensure social distancing and as a result, classroom attendance is restricted to much smaller numbers than previously. Sessions are repeated frequently to ensure that education is available to as many staff as possible. Our records show that the numbers attending have vastly increased since the pandemic began. As the restrictions lift, we will add further programmes to our Prospectus, on an incremental basis over the coming weeks and months.

The camaraderie of staff who attended the education sessions was similar to the MN CMS training in 2016. The fear associated with COVID-19 was balanced with enthusiasm to provide excellent evidence-based, safe care to all CUMH service users. Staff stated that they now felt more prepared to deal with the challenges associated with COVID-19 care.

As Director of the CME I would like to thank the CME team and acknowledge the immense work undertaken by everyone from the first moment we were asked to provide education specific to COVID-19 in February, 2020. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the COVID-19 Education Faculty who put so much effort and time into developing and delivering the respiratory education programme. The photos outline the team members in full flight during training sessions.

A special acknowledgement to the Practice Development Team and their new coordinator, Fiona Kirby, for their collaboration in the effective rolling out of the PPE donning and doffing, in the clinical environments. We, in the CME, congratulate Fiona and wish her well in her new role and congratulate her predecessor, Claire Everard, on her new appointment. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the clinical staff who took the responsibility to train their colleagues in donning and doffing.

Respiratory Care Pathway education was developed and delivered by a multidisciplinary team inclusive of obstetricians, a physiotherapist a pharmacist and the CME to outline the pathway that would be used with pregnant women in CUMH.



Top left: *Dr Nóirín Russell, Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist presenting at the first Respiratory Care pathway education session*

Top right: *Liz Barry, Deputy Physiotherapy Manager, who also took part in the Respiratory Care pathway education sessions*

Centre left: *Dr Nóirín Russell, Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist and Sarah*

Fenton, Pharmacist in discussion with Fiona Kirby and Marie Healy from the Practice Development team

Centre right: *Fionnuala Hunt and Áine Blake, Midwifery Specialist Coordinators and Sarah Fenton, Pharmacist presenting the Respiratory Care pathway education session*

Right: *Dr Aoife Morris and Dr David Crosby*

Olive Long Retirement

by Úna Cahill, A/Assistant Director of Midwifery CUMH
and Cathy O’Sullivan, A/Director of CME, CUMH

Olive Long, who worked as Director of Midwifery in CUMH, retired from our service early this year. Focussing on a new chapter of her life, she takes with her memories of a fruitful career in nursing and midwifery and leaves wonderful memories for those of us that remain.

A Tipperary lady, Olive started her voyage into the caring profession with nurse training in Cork University Hospital, qualifying in 1982. She commenced her Midwifery training immediately afterwards and began her career as a staff midwife in St Finbarr’s Hospital in 1983.

Olive’s priority was always to keep the mothers attending the service central to the care they received. Working throughout St. Finbarr’s hospital she provided care and expert knowledge in the antenatal, postnatal and Intrapartum settings. As a midwife she not only cared for women with kindness and compassion, but mentored and encouraged young midwives and student midwives as they spent time in these areas.

She returned to education herself in 2003 and in the next number of years secured her BSc degree in Nursing and also her MSc. Her interest in education and mentoring continued when

she was seconded as a tutor to the College of Midwifery in 2005. Here Olive worked on a project to provide an update of midwifery skills for midwives working in community hospitals to support normal birth in the event that women attended a community hospital in advanced labour. She also provided midwifery updates for practice nurses and guided and influenced midwifery students as they embarked on their individual midwifery journeys. Olive also led in the area of neonatal resuscitation, being one of the first midwives to train as an instructor.

In 2006, Olive commenced her role as Practice Development Co-Ordinator for the Unified Maternity Services in the Erinville and St Finbarr’s. This coincided with the introduction of the BSc Midwifery programme in UCC which was the first graduate programme for midwives in Ireland. Olive set up the first Practice Development team, and instigated this new service. Here she was instrumental in the research, writing and development of policies, procedures and guidelines for the service as it took a significant step and moved to Cork University Maternity Hospital in 2007. Olive continued to work tirelessly in this area as the hospital and the multidisciplinary teams within settled, unified and grew together.



Top: 2001; Mary Crowley, Ann Healy, Carmel Lehane, Mary Quaide, Olive Long, Fiona Blake and Mary O’Riordan at Fiona Blake’s prenuptial party

Centre left: Paula Murphy, Emer Nation, Kate Casey, Olive Long and Anna Marie Verling in St Finbarr’s

Left: Olive Long, Dr Saleh, Patient husband, Yvonne, Carmel Lehane, Patient with twins, Stephanie Desmond in St Finbarr’s

In 2016 Olive became the Director of Midwifery and it is this role that many of us remember her for. Midwifery practice was safe in her hands as she brought her knowledge and expertise to the position. Her time as Director saw the roll out of DOMINO care here in CUMH and the go-live of the MN-CMS along with many others. Olive was an active member of many committees in her role as Director of Midwifery; in particular she was a champion for the Domestic Violence Committee and all its endeavours to educate staff and support women exposed to domestic violence.

And while Olive spent long hours working over the years she is also a lady who loved her family; quietly over a cup of tea she spoke proudly of her daughters Alison and Ruth, or fondly of her time off in west Cork with John her husband. We have all surely heard about John's bees and their wonderful honey! Olive took regular trips home to Cahir dedicating time to both her parents before they died and of course to Aidan her brother whom she was immensely proud of and invested much energy into the Special Olympics in her time off in support of Aidan. Singing was another great passion and she travelled to the UK as a member of the hospital choir "Scrubs" when they entered "Britain's Got Talent".

As a midwife, a manager and a leader Olive showed such kindness and compassion to those she encountered, always finding time for anyone who knocked on her door or needed a quiet word. We wish her well in her retirement and hope she has found the time now to explore and develop new interests along with expanding on those she has always loved – her garden and her painting.

"Olive retired early 2020, after 41 years of dedicated, loyal professional service. On behalf of us all I wish to place on record our deepest gratitude to Olive for her magnificent contribution to maternity services in Cork and the wider region. From student nurse, through to Director of Midwifery Olive has always maintained the highest possible professional standards. She will be a huge loss to CUMH. We wish Olive, her husband John, daughters Ruth and Alison every happiness and good health in the years ahead."

**Professor John R. Higgins,
Clinical Director, Ireland South
Women & Infants Directorate**



Above: 2017; Professor John R. Higgins, Clinical Director, Maternity Services with Kacper Ciolek, aged 10 from Kenmare, Co. Kerry (the first baby born at Cork University Maternity Hospital) and Olive Long, Director of Midwifery CUMH
Photo: John Sheehan



Top: 2019; Mary O'Sullivan, Therapist, Sexual Violence Centre; Olive Long, DOM CUMH; Mary Crilly, Sexual Violence Centre; Maria Cummins, TY student and Ann-Marie McCarthy, Fiona Kirby, Áine Cahill, and Fidelma Harrington of CUMH

Above: 2019; Denise Malone, Cathy O'Sullivan, Monica O'Regan, Nilima Pandit, Claire Everard, Mary Quaide, Niamh Spillane, Fidelma Harrington, Úna Cahill and Olive Long



Top: December 2019; Olive Long gives her retirement speech in Le Chéile, CUMH

Centre left: December 2019; Presentation of flowers by Professor John R. Higgins to Olive Long alongside Katie Bourke and Miriam Lyons in CUMH

Centre right: December 2019; Olive Long's final Executive Management Meeting in CUMH,

Michael Hanna, Dr Brendan Murphy, Dervla Hogan, Olive Long, Professor John R. Higgins, Miriam Lyons, Maria Healy, Dr Mairead O'Riordan, Louise Riordan

Left: December 2019; Olive Long listens to her daughter's choir in CUMH at the staff children's party on her last day in the office



Ireland South on the Road

Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate is taking the brand on the road. Cork University Maternity Hospital revealed the first branded car, a Hyundai Tucson, on 29 April to staff. The car features the Ireland South brand on the bonnet and sides of the car, with the back of the car featuring the HSE logo and the hospital name. Everyone agrees it looks very stylish!

The car will be used for community outreach and for patient transfer in certain cases. All units in Cork, Waterford, Kerry and Tipperary will receive a branded version of a Hyundai i30 Tourer Estate in the coming months.

Hyundai Tucson





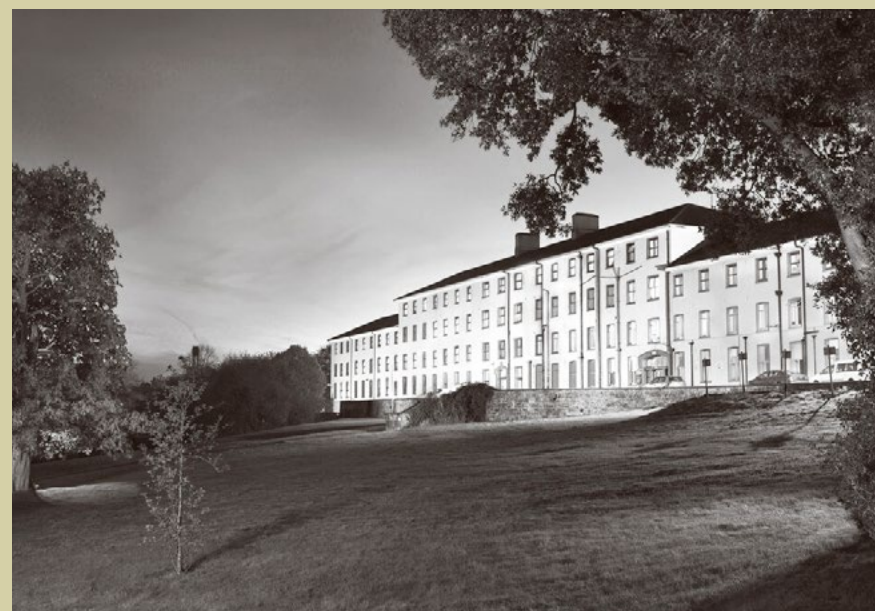
Cork University Maternity Hospital



University Hospital Kerry



University Hospital Waterford



South Tipperary General Hospital

Have you got a story?

If you have a story for a future issue of **UltraNews** we would love to hear from you!

Please contact **Donna Burtchaell**,
Communications Project Manager on mobile
087 0962567 or email donna.burtchaell@ucc.ie

Articles for inclusion in the next newsletter must
be submitted no later than **15 July 2020**