



## **Irish Institute of Mental Health Nursing AGM**

### **Report from the Chairperson**

#### **Inaugural Launch and Conference**

The Irish Institute of Mental Health Nursing was launched on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2009 as a professional nursing body for nurses working in mental health care domains following many months of planning & work. The inaugural launch and conference took place in Trinity College Dublin. The Minister for State at the Department of Health & Children with responsibility for Mental Health, Minister John Moloney, formally launched the Institute. Other guest speakers included Professor Patrick - Callaghan University of Nottingham, Mary Farrelly - National Council for Professional Development Nursing & Midwifery, Mr John Redican - National Service User Executive and Martin Rogan - HSE. Over one hundred nurses involved in various aspects of mental health nursing including clinical practice, education, management along with service users and advocates attended the event.

The National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing & Midwifery supported the establishment of the Institute following an application for financial support for seed funding, and for that we are extremely grateful.

#### **Agreed Charter**

The following charter was agreed for the Institute.

The aim of the Institute is to promote excellence in the provision of quality Mental Health Nursing and mental health service delivery, within the context of a multidisciplinary approach, both in Ireland and internationally.

The objectives of the Institute are to:

- act as a forum to facilitate and enable discussion and debate on issues relevant to the Mental Health Nursing;
- promote excellence in Mental Health practice and mental health nurse education;
- foster the ongoing development of the profession of Mental Health Nursing;
- contribute to policy development on matters relevant to Mental Health Nursing and mental health service development;
- serve as a critical voice for Mental Health Nursing;
- promote opportunities for networking and professional development among Nurses practising in the Field of Mental Health;
- promote and advocate the use, development and expansion of Mental Health Nursing.

## Benefits

Membership benefits shall include:

- Opportunity for networking and professional development;
- Opportunity to contribute to and influence policy development;
- Opportunity to collaborate in relation to research, practice development and education;
- Opportunities to avail of grants, bursaries, made available by the Institute;
- Access to a quarterly electronic newsletter;
- Access to interactive discussion forums;
- Reduced fees for conferences, workshops, seminars, and master classes organised by the Institute.

## **Submissions**

The Institute has been active in influencing policy and practice through the submission of position papers in response to policy guidance documents being prepared.

In November 2009, a detailed report was submitted to the HSE's in response to a call for input into the publication on Enhancing Organisational Learning around the Mental Health Act 2001-2009.

In April 2010, a detailed submission was made to the Department of Health and Children's working group on a restraint free environment in nursing homes. While we welcomed the introduction of the discussion of 'restraint free care' we urged the development of a positively framed policy with guidelines which promote the search for the *least restrictive alternatives* rather than dogmatic adherence to the absence of certain devices. The development of Institutes position paper was led by Dr Kate Irving, and I would like to record our thanks to Kate.

Members of the Institute were also involved in collating information on ECT for the Department of Health and Children to inform the national debate on ECT and legislative proposals in that regard.

## **Meetings with the Minister for State at the Department of Health & Children with responsibility for Mental Health**

Members of the Executive of the Institute met with the Minister responsible for Mental Health & Disability, Mr. John Moloney on three occasions to discuss mental health nursing and provided him with a written report on priority areas for mental health nursing and mental health care into the future.

## **Publication of Guidelines for Practice**

The Institute worked in collaboration with GLEN (Gay and Lesbian Equality Network) to produce a Good Practice Guide on LGB issues in Mental Health. This is a very comprehensive and detailed document that reviews research evidence in the area and provides guides lines for good inclusive practice in relation LGB people. The document was launched at the symposium in April by Mr Davin Roche, Director of Communication and Policy at GLEN and is available on the websites of the Institute and GLEN.

## **Representation of the Institute on other committees**

The chairperson of the Institute has also been invited to be a member of the recently formed national steering group that is reviewing Mental Health Nursing in Ireland. This committee is jointly chaired by Mr Martin Rogan and Ms Siobhan O'Halloran, HSE. The vice Chairman sits on the Expert Panel of Horatio, the European Psychiatric Nurses Organisation.

## **Website**

To assist the Institute conduct its business an interactive website was developed. This interactive website has assisted the Institute establish a medium for communication with mental health nurses and links with other professional organisations within and outside of the country. It has also facilitated members to join the Institute using an online application and payment process. On behalf of the membership and executive and the wider Institute membership, I would like to say a sincere thanks to Dr Richard Lakemen for the time and expertise that he has contributed to the development and maintenance of the website.

## **Membership**

Ordinary Membership of 'Institute' is open to all Nurses practising in the Field of Mental Health'

Associate membership is open to all persons and organisations who are not eligible for ordinary membership.

Since the launch, the Institute has attracted increasing numbers of members and influence is growing. Membership now stands at 183, with a total of 55 paid up members.

## **Annual symposium**

The first Annual Symposium was held at the School of Nursing, Dublin City University on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2010. The theme of this Symposium was 'Mental Health Nurses: Leaders or Followers?' This symposium was attended by one hundred and twelve people with representation from mental health nursing practice, education, management and undergraduate and postgraduate students. The National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing & Midwifery supported the symposium following an application for financial support.

The day was split into two parts – the morning session was chaired by Dr. Harry Gijbels and included an opening address from Professor Phil Barker entitled "Leading Who, to Where, Exactly?" This was followed by a debate on the statement "Mental Health Nurses are Leaders, not Followers". Speaking for the motion were Martin Rogan Assistant National Director Mental Health HSE; Des Kavanagh General Secretary Psychiatric Nurses Association; Mary Farrelly National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing & Midwifery; and Dr. Pat Bracken, Clinical Director West Cork Mental health Services, whilst Professor Seamus Cowman, RCSI; Professor Agnes Higgins Trinity College Dublin; Ms Ann Coughlan, Nurse Practice Development Co-ordinator Cork; and Paddy McGowan DCU spoke against the motion.

The afternoon session, chaired by Professor Denis Ryan which commenced with Professor Peter Nolan presenting a session on "Our Values – Real or Imagined?"

after which the Good Practice Guide for Mental Health Nurses on Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual People was launched by Mr Davin Roach.

Throughout the day there was an opportunity to view some excellent posters presentations. The poster prizes, which were kindly sponsored by the PNA, went to:

Jelena Adams student nurse at Cumbria University for her Poster on Mental Health Promotion.

Margaret Prendergast, Ken Hogan, Rosaleen Murray, Mark Garavan, Siobhan Lynch. (Dept of Nursing and Health Sciences, GMTI, Castlebar, Co Mayo) for their poster on 'Follow the leader? Using experiential Drama in undergraduate Psychiatric Nursing.

Babu Lal Yadav (National Forensic Mental Health Services, Central Mental Hospital, Dundrum, Dublin) for the poster on 'The development of evidence-based practice among Irish psychiatric nurses: Perceived sources of evidence, barriers, facilitators and skills to achieve evidence based practice'.

I would like to say a sincere thanks to Philip James, Elaine Collins, Teresa Tuohy Ashling Cullhane and Siobhain Smyth for the work they put in to make the day a success.

### **Acknowledgements**

Over the year we have received support from many organisations and people. On behalf of the Executive I would like to say a sincere thanks to all of them. Firstly the National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery for their support and funding, which was critical in helping us achieve key objectives for the first year of the Institute. The PNA who willingly sponsored the prizes for the poster competition at the annual symposium. Mr Mark Monaghan for giving of his time and skill to record the events with some skilful photography. Likewise thanks is due to both Trinity College, Dublin and DCU for their generosity in offering venues for our meetings and events since our inception.

I would personally like to extend my thanks to the members of the executive who assisted me throughout the year. Finally I would like to pay tribute to the contributions of Agnes Tully, Alison Van Laar who are standing down from the Executive, and Jonathan Spendlow who is standing down from the position of Treasurer. Their contribution to the work of the Institute at this stage has been noteworthy and I am pleased that they will continue to make positive contributions to the work of the Executive in different ways as we develop into the future.

Thank you

Prof. Agnes Higgins  
Chairperson Irish Institute of Mental Health Nursing