

PRESS RELEASE

**HEALTH CARE IN IRELAND -
THE VALUE OF GETTING IT RIGHT FAR OUTWEIGHS THE COST OF GETTING IT WRONG**

2nd February 2021: Investment in sustainable high quality clinical audit and quality improvement programmes would help to ensure that many of the failures faced by the Irish health service in the recent past are not repeated, according to National Office of Clinical Audit (NOCA) Chair, Mr Kenneth Mealy.

Speaking ahead of his welcome address at the NOCA Webinar 2021 taking place later today, Mr Mealy acknowledged what happens when things go wrong in healthcare. “We need to consider not only the harm to patients and their families but also the monetary and reputational costs, which could always be better used elsewhere in the health service.”

Referencing notable examples such as the CervicalCheck and the Hepatitis C and HIV blood contamination scandals, Mr Mealy emphasised the importance of health care in getting it ‘right’. He noted “if we have learnt anything in this country, it should be that while audit and quality assurance programmes do come with a cost – this cost pales in comparison to the cost of not getting it right.”

Mr Mealy commended the work of those in hospitals around the country, who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic and have ensured the continued collection of high quality data and maintained a focus on quality improvement initiatives. He noted that 16 submissions were made to the NOCA Quality Improvement Champion Award 2021, an accolade which seeks to recognise the commitment and dedication in the Irish health care system to the constant need for quality improvement to improve patient care. He also welcomed the recently launched NOCA campaign, #PeopleBehindthePPE. He commented “This campaign is a way to acknowledge and celebrate the amazing dedication shown by staff across our health service in what are incredibly challenging times. We get to see the many faces from a multitude of disciplines and healthcare areas who have worked together to ensure the Irish health service has survived this crisis”.

Mr Mealy added: “NOCA is committed to support the journey to help transform the Irish healthcare system through sustainable high quality national clinical audits and quality improvement programmes. We are also committed to ensuring that our audit portfolio develops and expands to meet the needs of our healthcare system.”

NOCA was established in 2012 to create sustainable clinical audit programmes at national level. NOCA enables those who manage and deliver healthcare to improve the quality of care through national clinical audit. NOCA is funded by the Health Service Executive Quality Improvement Team, governed by an independent voluntary board and operationally supported by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

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