

Professor Mary Hanratty,


Our ref: AD-0058-09

Your ref:

Date: 16 July 2009

Dear Ms Hanratty,

I am the solicitor to the above named Inquiry, established in November 2004 by the then Minister for Health in Northern Ireland, Angela Smith MP. Her decision was made against the background of public concern about the treatment in local hospitals of children who died of hyponatraemia, which was highlighted in a documentary entitled "When Hospitals Kill". For your reference, I have attached a copy of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.

In formulating a List of Issues that the Inquiry will address, it has become apparent that a major factor to be addressed at the oral hearings stage is the education and training that doctors and nurses received in the areas outlined below. The Chairman is of the view that a background paper covering this issue with reference to significant dates in the work of the Inquiry would be beneficial to all parties. The dates take into account a 20 year period prior to the death of the first child whom the Inquiry is concerned with and thereafter, other deaths, dates of inquests and the date of the introduction and subsequent revision of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) Guidelines on the Prevention of Hyponatraemia in Children.

The Inquiry Team's current proposal is that a paper dealing with the issues detailed below, relating to the training and education of nurses (here in Northern Ireland) will be provided. It is envisaged that Question 3 will be dealt with by authors practising in the Republic of Ireland and other parts of the UK.

The areas to be covered are:

What was/is the teaching and training in Northern Ireland provided to:

(i) *nurses as part of their qualification and*

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- (ii) to nurses as part of their induction, training and continuous professional development in Northern Ireland

on fluid management, hyponatraemia and record keeping:

- (a) between 1975-1995
- (b) by November 1995
- (c) between 28 November 1995 and Adam's Inquest which finished on 21 June 1996.
- (d) between 21 June 1996 and 23 October 1996.
- (e) between 23 October 1996 and 14 April 2000
- (f) between 14 April 2000 and 10 June 2001
- (g) between 10 June 2001 and March 2002 (the issue of the DHSSPS Guidelines on the Prevention of Hyponatraemia in Children)
- (h) between March 2002 and 5 February 2003
- (i) between 5 February 2003 and 12 May 2003
- (j) between 12 May 2003 and 19 February 2004
- (k) between 19 February 2004 and 9 June 2004 (March 2004 – revision of DHSSPS Guidance on Prevention of Hyponatraemia in Children)
- (l) between 9 June 2004 and 4 May 2006.
- (m) since 4 May 2006 to date.

To include consideration of:

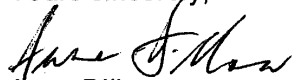
- (1) To what extent was fluid management, hyponatraemia and record keeping covered in the teaching, training and CPD at the various points in time (a)-(m).
- (2) To what extent there were any changes in the teaching, training and CPD between the dates set out in (a)-(m) above, and what were the effects of those changes, if any.
- (3) How does that teaching training and CPD compare to the rest of the UK and the Republic of Ireland at those various times (a)-(m).

I would be grateful for your initial views regarding the feasibility of this exercise in accordance with the structure proposed above or discussion of a model you may feel to be more appropriate. Should you be willing to undertake this task, please let me have an indication of your fees and a timeframe within which you would be able to supply the paper.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter in more detail with you. I can be contacted by email at [REDACTED] or my direct dial telephone number is [REDACTED].

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Anne Dillon
Solicitor to the Inquiry