



Submission
cranston to: IRGPRIVATEPUBLIC

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History: This message has been replied to.

Secretary to the Expert Review Group examining Private Practice in Public Hospitals
C/O Room 424
Department of Health

I wish to make the following observations. I am focusing on hospital doctors because our hospitals have a consultant-led service.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Unlike other areas of the Irish public service, there is almost no career structure for doctors in the Irish health service. Either they are on three year contract as a Registrar / Senior Registrar with a salary of around €50,000 to €80,000 pa but no certainty about continuation of employment, or they hit the big league and earn over €200,000 pa irrespective of whether they have the entitlement to treat private patients.

All other sectors in the public service have a series of professional grades rising to the most senior, with overlapping salary scales and permanency achievable approximately 5 years after graduation.

There needs to be at least two new grades of permanent hospital doctor created, with salary scales of, for example, €70,000 to €120,000 for "Hospital Specialists" and €100,000 to €170,000 for "Senior Hospital Specialists". For the price of one of today's consultants, you could get two or maybe three hospital doctors who would be exclusively committed to the patients in the hospital and would work on a consultant-led team.

OPERATIONAL MATTERS

People do not get sick conveniently between 8am and 4:30pm Monday to Friday. Representatives of consultants' unions tell us that most of their members go into the hospital on Saturdays or Sundays in their own time to check on their patients (optional and so cannot be relied on) or that they are "on call" (junior doctors and nurses are reluctant to disturb them on Sundays at home with their families).

All hospital doctors, from interns to consultants, should be contracted to work 24/7 with an appropriate system of supervision to ensure attendance as rostered.

Dublin Airport is open and fully operational all weekend every weekend, to support commerce.

Healthcare is far more important than business and leisure travel and freight transport. If pilots, air traffic control controllers and all airport support staff can be scheduled for Saturdays and Sundays on a rolling basis without it impinging on their health or family life, so can medical personnel - in other words, 5 days over 7 days.

As things stand, weekend and holiday attendance of consultants and provision of ancillary services laboratory testing, Xrays, etc. is reminiscent of the "cottage hospitals" of the 1930s and 40s.

With kind regards,
Michael Cranston