

## Meeting of Pandemic Ethics Advisory Group Minutes

- **Attendees (via Microsoft Teams):**
  - Dr Siobhán O’Sullivan (Chair);
  - Dr Simon Mills SC;
  - Prof. David Smith;
  - Dr Joan McCarthy;
  - Dr Andrea Mulligan BL;
  - Dr Louise Campbell;
  - Mr Mervyn Taylor.
- **Apologies:**
  - Mr Stephen McMahon;
  - Dr Barry Lyons.
- **Also in Attendance:**
  - Emily de Grae (secretariat);
  - Audrey Ní Chaoidealbháin (secretariat).

### 1. Minutes

- The Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed.

### 2. Update from NPHE

- The Chair provided an update on the most recently available COVID-19 statistics.
- The Chair informed the members that the NPHE had approved the Ethical Considerations for PPE Use by Health Care Workers in a Pandemic paper. She advised that the HSE was also planning to make a recommendation in relation to PPE and that once this was finalised and agreed both papers would be published simultaneously.
- She noted that NPHE continues to focus on nursing home clusters and staffing issues within the sector as well as infection control measures in other long-term residential care settings.
- The Chair also stated that the NPHE was considering how best to advise on the de-escalating the current restrictions and that this would most likely involve a gradual lifting of measures in line with public health advice and international practice.
- She outlined some of the recent work being undertaken in relation to research both in terms of drug development and broader medical and social research. She advised that Ireland is a member of the WHO Solidarity Trial.

### 3. Feedback on *Ethical Considerations Relating to Critical Care in the context of COVID-19* paper

- The Chair informed the members that the Critical Care paper had now been added to the HSE document repository.
- The secretariat updated members on the feedback to the document from patient advocacy groups and media coverage in relation to how decisions regarding admission to ICU should be made as well as the responses provided by the Department.

- There followed a discussion on the feedback to the paper and what the PEAG might do to reassure people as to its guidance and intent.
- The Chair informed members that the Minister would make a statement in the Dáil setting out clearly how the document states that no single factor (e.g. age or disability) could be taken in isolation to determine whether ICU treatment is provided and that clinical decisions would be based on a multifactorial assessment of a patient's ability to withstand and recover from the critical care intervention.
- It was agreed that the next PEAG publication would address the issue of inclusivity more specifically.

#### **4. Future Work**

- The group had a discussion regarding the future work programme for the PEAG.
- An overview of the scoping paper relating to ethical considerations for providing care in nursing homes during the pandemic was provided.
- An overview of the scoping paper dealing with COVID-19 and intellectual disability was provided.
- The Chair informed the group that the Chair of the Vulnerable Persons (VP) subgroup was supportive of the next paper from the PEAG addressing issues relating to nursing homes.
- Members agreed to prioritise work relating to the impact of COVID-19 on all long-term care/congregated care/community settings. The Chair stated that the secretariat would prepare a draft table of contents for the document which would be circulated along with the set of issues under discussion by the VP subgroup. Once agreed the draft table of contents would be sent for review to the VP subgroup.
- An overview of the scoping paper on good citizenship was provided. Members agreed that this was an important topic and should be considered as the country moves towards lifting the current restrictions into a more long-term management of COVID-19 in the absence of an effective vaccine.

#### **5. AOB**

- It was agreed that the PEAG would meet again on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April.