

Mental Health Surge Capacity PMB

That Dáil Éireann:

acknowledges:

- that a mental health crisis demands an emergency response;
- the World Health Organisation recommends that a minimum of 14% of a country's overall health budget be allocated for mental health;
- SláinteCare recommends a minimum mental health budget of 10%;
- government's mental health spend in 2020 was reduced to 5.2% of the overall health budget;
- the €10m in additional funding committed to in the Government's COVID-19; Resilience and Recovery 2021 Plan falls far short of what is needed to provide the emergency care adults and children desperately need.

further acknowledges:

- 2,551 children and young people are waiting for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and 8,893 children are waiting for primary care psychology;
- 1,553 adults are waiting on primary care psychology treatment with the HSE;
- there remains no state-wide provision of 24/7 crisis mental health care at a community level;
- waiting lists for mental health care within the public system were at crisis levels before the pandemic and are now at emergency levels;
- the Mental Health Commission told the Oireachtas Special Committee on Covid-19 Response that Ireland's mental health system is not fit for purpose and is out of date and that investment in it and the community is needed.

recognises:

- community and voluntary front-line services are experiencing an unprecedented demand for mental health care;
- increased numbers of adults, children and young people are presenting to services for the first time;
- clinical and public mental health specialists have advised that Ireland is facing into a tsunami of mental health need;
- the private sector has the capacity to provide emergency talk therapy and acute care.

commends:

- the commitment of public health staff, and the community and voluntary sector in maintaining mental health services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic;

- the commitment of non-traditional mental health community organisations who are providing mental health supports to meet the emerging needs in our communities.

calls on the Government to:

- establish an emergency talk therapy fund to provide an additional 128,000 sessions with an accredited counsellor or therapist in the private system for those in need of immediate support on referral from a GP;
- remove GP and medical cards accessibility barriers to deliver universal access to counselling in primary care (CIPC);
- recruit 138 additional child/adolescent psychologists and 138 additional adult psychologists to provide additional capacity in every primary care facility;
- assist community organisations to continue to provide mental health supports;
- create two, one off funding streams to support trainee Counselling Psychologists during the pandemic
- establish a 24/7 Care Public Crisis De-escalation, Multi Agency Triage Team Ambulance Service in every CHO area;
- maximise surge capacity within all private hospitals with acute mental health beds in accordance with the 'surge capacity' agreement currently in place.