

ALONE CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE REVERSAL OF HSE PROPOSED CUTS TO HOME HELP

August 31, 2012 Responding to the announcement of proposed home care cuts by the HSE, CEO of ALONE Seán Moynihan called for a reversal of the proposals. “We’re calling on the government to immediately reverse these proposed cuts and to outline how they intend to protect the welfare of older people in need of home care services. These proposed cuts will affect the most vulnerable in society - older people in need of support - who are being more and more marginalised as a result of ongoing austerity measures.”

He continued, “We need to see Minister Reilly making good on his commitment to provide care in the community for older people most in need. He has repeatedly stated that care provision in people’s own homes is the preferred option. However, these proposals will have exactly the opposite effect as it will inevitably lead to increased hospital admissions which is totally counterproductive if the purpose of these cuts is to save costs.”

“These cuts affect the basic needs of the one in ten older people who are in dire need of support which includes daily activities such as washing and cleaning. This is totally unacceptable. Home care services are low-cost yet high value. The cost of home care provision is significantly less than that of nursing home care provision, or long term hospital stay and to propose cuts in this area is shortsighted in the extreme. ”

Commenting on the effect of these announcements on older people, Moynihan commented “Proposed cuts of this nature cause a significant amount of distress among older people, many of whom are already on the margins of poverty and currently receiving home care services. This leads to increased risks to health. It’s vital that this is avoided at all costs and the Minister must reassure the public that current service levels will not be affected.”

“We recognise the reality that the HSE needs to make cuts,

but cutbacks in this area are unfathomable when they will clearly lead to increased costs in long term hospital stay and nursing homes. The fact that we have an ageing population and there will be increased demand for these exact services in the short-term has not been taken into consideration by the Minister. These proposals highlight the underlying issues in the health system, which absolutely must be reformed so that services for older people and services in general are maintained.”

“We call on all parties involved to begin discussing the reform of the health system to ensure that future needs are taken into consideration. There is no quick fix solution to this growing problem for the health system and this must be addressed. All service providers in the sector, including ALONE, must be willing to acknowledge that change in the system is necessary, while ensuring that service levels do not suffer,” concluded Moynihan.

ALONE works with the one in ten older people who are in need of support, by providing a befriending service, housing and community services. ALONE has seen demand for its services increase dramatically in the last two years, resulting in a strain on resources. ALONE marks its 35th anniversary in 2012. Older people in need of assistance or support can contact ALONE on (01) 679 1032. www.alone.ie

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