

ALONE STATEMENT ON HSE LONG-STAY HOSPITAL BED CUTS

February 22, 2012 Responding to the announcement by the HSE of 111 cuts in long stay hospital beds in Mid-Leinster, CEO of ALONE Seán Moynihan commented that “This significant reduction in the number of beds in the mid-Leinster region will have far-reaching consequences for those affected. We’re extremely concerned about the level of communication with those older people who will be directly affected, who will have to move back into their own homes with no provision made by the HSE for home care or home help. We are strongly supportive of allowing older people to stay in their own homes, however increased investment in community services and home care is vital to support this. If the 111 bed cuts are being made solely for savings purposes, with no reinvestment into home care services, we foresee the 111 older people who will lose their beds facing very difficult circumstances.”

He continued, “We’re calling on the Minister to make good on his commitment to providing care in the community for older people in need. The cost of home care provision is significantly less than that of providing long stay hospital care, and we would like to see any savings re-invested into home care services, not a reduction in both. We’re calling on the government to outline how they intend to protect the welfare of older people in need of these services, and to implement a wide ranging strategy for ageing in this regard.”

About their “Your Service Your Say” policy the HSE states; “In June 2008, the ‘National Strategy for Service User Involvement in the Irish Health Service’ was launched. This Strategy confirms the commitment of the DoHC and the HSE to provide opportunities for people who use health services and their families and advocates to have input into how services operate, to provide feedback and to be heard.” On this point, Moynihan commented that “To have the HSE telling older people with hospital care needs that they are being made homeless and then ‘consulting’ with them does not seem to be in the spirit of this commitment. It leads to confusion and distress for those utilising the services, adding additional health concerns to existing conditions. We find this completely unacceptable and call for a more respectful manner of communication with those who will be affected.”

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 18 months, resulting in a strain on resources. For older people with concerns about this announcement, ALONE can provide advice and support on (01) 679 1032.