

PHECC Council Meeting Minutes
13 April 2023
PHECC Office, Naas & Video Conference



Present:

Jacqueline Burke (Chairperson)
Hillery Collins

Video Conference:

Jason van der Velde (Vice-Chair)
Aidan O'Brien
David Menzies
Jimmy Jordan
Martin O'Reilly
Niamh Collins
Patrick Fleming
Tess O'Donovan
Tomás Barry
William Merriman

Apologies:

Alison Smith
Conor Deasy
Dennis Keeley
Fiona McDaid

In attendance:

Con Foley, Council Secretary (VC)
Richard Lodge, PHECC Director
Brendan Cawley, PHECC Manager
Ray Carney, PHECC Manager (VC)
Ricky Ellis, PHECC Manager
Karen O'Neill, Council Administrator

1.0. Open & Welcome

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, noting apologies received, and thanked the members of Council for both their condolences and support following her recent bereavement. She also thanked the Vice-Chair, Jason van der Velde, for officiating in her absence.

2.0. Declarations of Interest

No notifications of Conflicts of Interest had been received in regard to any item of the Agenda.

3.0. Clinical Report

3.1. 7th Schedule Amendment Report for Department of Health Medicines Unit*

Following the earlier reported meeting with the Medicines Unit, the Trauma & Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Unit and the Critical Care Unit in the Department of Health [DoH], attended by members of MAC, including the Pharmacist Advisor, MAC tabled a draft submission of amendments suggested for the 7th Schedule of the Medicinal Products (Prescription and Control of Supply) Regulations 2003 (as amended in 2014) for Council approval. Amendments and additions being proposed are primarily to facilitate specialised paramedic practice and to prepare for future clinical developments. Each medication had been reviewed by the MAC Pharmacist Advisor, detailing the underpinning evidence for each in the report. If implemented, this will set out the schedule of medicines which may be administered by paramedics, appropriately privileged by way of Clinical Practice Guidelines.

Council recorded its compliments at the quantum of work completed by MAC and its advisors to bring the draft to this point and having suggested a small number of amendments, approved same for formal submission to the Medicines Unit of the Department.

Resolution: That Council approves the draft Report on Proposed Additions to the 7th Schedule for formal submission to the Department of Health to enable specialist paramedics going forward.

Proposed: Hillery Collins

Seconded: Jason van der Velde

Carried without dissent

3.2. 10th Schedule Amendment Report for Department of Health Medicines Unit*

In addition to the amendments proposed above, MAC also brought draft amendments to the 10th Schedule of the Medicinal Products Regulations (Medications for Listed Organisations) which is further regulated by the Health Products Regulatory Authority [HPRA]. In the case of the first of these, oxygen was recommended by MAC to be added to the 10th Schedule. Oxygen has been administered as a matter of custom and practice by emergency services for many years.

Council approved the suggested addition of oxygen to the 10th Schedule, as part of the formal submission to the Department of Health Medicines Unit, to allow for its administration.

Resolution: That Council approves the addition of oxygen to the formal proposal to the Department of Health to amend the 10th Schedule.

Proposed: Tomás Barry

Seconded: Niamh Collins

Carried without dissent

3.2.a. Methoxyflurane Governance for SI 449 Organisations*

Issues arising in relation to the management of and access to Methoxyflurane were outlined. While the benefits of availability of this medication to specific rescue organisations working in austere environments are accepted, there are concerns around organisation governance, given that many are responder organisations who, unlike Licensed CPG Service Providers, do not currently come under formal PHECC Governance Validation Framework. It was noted however that the Quality Review Framework for education providers does apply to the education of Responders.

Current arrangements under legislation requires PHECC to provide a training programme and CPGs with the Health Products Regulatory Authority given responsibility for governance.

During a detailed discussion, Council balanced the advantages of portability and availability for use in austere and remote settings (e.g. in mountain or cave settings) against the fact that Methoxyflurane had been misused resulting in a criminal conviction.

Cognisant of PHECC's primary role to protect the public and considering the balance of risks, with safety paramount, Council decided to recommend that the use of Methoxyflurane will be restricted to Licensed CPG Service Providers only. PHECC CPGs will be developed to allow those organisations who participate in the GVF process enable non-practitioners to administer the drug.

On this basis Council also approved the addition of Methoxyflurane to the formal proposal to amend the 10th Schedule of the Medicines Regulations, cited above.

Resolution: That Council approves the draft report to the Department of Health proposing an amendment to the 10th Schedule to include methoxyflurane, though the drug will only be available to PHECC Licensed CPG Service Providers. PHECC CPGs will be developed to allow those organisations who participate in the GVF process to enable their non-practitioners to administer the drug.

Proposed: Hillery Collins

Seconded: Niamh Collins

Carried without dissent

It is hoped that other emergency services may consider the opportunity to become PHECC Licensed CPG Service Providers.

3.3. Paramedic Scope of Practice

Following Councils earlier decision to move towards a Level 8 qualification for paramedics and alignment with the National Framework of Qualifications, MAC were requested to explore paramedic scope of practice into the future. MAC have discussed and reviewed the paramedic scope of practice with proposed changes outlined in a draft paper for initial Council feedback. A comparison was also undertaken with international scopes of practice for paramedics in other jurisdictions with variances noted across different systems.

In discussion it was generally accepted that the initial task is to redefine the role, capabilities, competencies, skills and scope of practice for the basic paramedic grade of the register, accepting that specialist levels will be created. Associated changes to Advanced Paramedic and Emergency Medical Technician grades will follow, once PHECC have established these for the Paramedic grade.

It was noted that the existing draft paramedic competency framework is based on current scope of a paramedic and that the framework will require further revision to reflect changes to scope as a result of this process.

Having thanked MAC for the work done to date, Council noted the document tabled which has initiated the thought process in advance of a revised draft which is expected following further MAC review at their next meeting.

William Merriman joined the meeting during the above discussion.

3.4. Non-Conveyance CPGs to Paramedic Scope of Practice*

These CPGs were initially published in 2021 as non-core Advanced Paramedic CPGs. Following further consideration, MAC is now recommending to Council that these, excluding that of minor wounds, be included as non-core CPGs in the Paramedic Scope of Practice.

Accordingly, the CPGs were approved by Council with suggestions that system-level engagement is required with national structures. The importance of education/upskilling on these CPGs and governance of the education element was noted. It was agreed that a formal communication to senior leadership in the HSE, specifically CEO Bernard Gloster and the Chief Clinical Officer, Dr Colm Henry regarding the development of alternative care pathways should be issued, and Council passed the following resolutions.

Resolution: That Council requests the Director to write to HSE CEO Bernard Gloster and the Chief Clinical Officer, Dr Colm Henry regarding the development of alternative care pathways.

Proposed: Hillery Collins

Seconded: Tess O'Donovan

Carried without dissent

Resolution: That Council approves the addition of the detailed non-conveyance CPGs to the Paramedic Scope of Practice.

Proposed: Hillery Collins

Seconded: Tess O'Donovan

Carried without dissent

3.5. Non-Conveyance Self-Care Leaflets*

Following the publication of CPGs in 2021 regarding non-conveyance of patients, MAC have developed nine draft After-Care leaflets corresponding to the CPGs underpinned by evidence and national guidelines. It is proposed to provide the aftercare leaflets to Licensed CPG Service Providers in a variety of formats with no restriction on how the provider distributes the information. PHECC will be responsible for content and the inclusion of the PHECC logo will be a requirement for publication or distribution.

Council welcomed this initiative and subject to a suggested amendment of the Non-Injury Following Trauma leaflet, the content of all of the leaflets were approved by Council.

Resolution: That Council approves the content of the presented Non-Conveyance Aftercare Leaflets, subject to the agreed amendment to the Non-Injury Following Trauma leaflet.

Proposed: Aidan O'Brien

Seconded: Patrick Fleming

Carried without dissent

3.6. European Resuscitation Conference Approval*

A proposal was brought to Council to approve two MAC attendees at the European Resuscitation Council meeting in Barcelona in November next. The importance of PHECC presence at the event was recognised and the application for two attendances was approved. Any further applications from other relevant committees will be considered at the next Council meeting.

Resolution: That Council approves the application for two MAC delegates to attend the European Resuscitation Council meeting in November 2023, and will consider further attendance applications at the next Council meeting.

Proposed: Aidan O'Brien

Seconded: William Merriman

Carried without dissent

Jason van der Velde departed the meeting during item 4.0 to attend a trauma.

Council took a short recess.

4.0. Chair's Business

4.1. Correspondence

While no correspondence had been received, an earlier email from Dr M. Molloy regarding co-locating the May PHECC Council meeting in Killarney to coincide with the World Association of Disaster Medicine Bi-Annual Conference was referenced. Upon consideration, it was agreed that the request was received at short notice and as the date differs from the scheduled May Council meeting this co-location would not be possible.

4.2. Legislation Update

The Director indicated that further progress was being made on this issue in the DoH.

4.3. Proposal to move June Meeting

In order to provide sufficient time for consideration of the matter of Paramedic Education and the implementation of the Education Standards & Competency Frameworks, the Chair proposed that the June meeting be re-scheduled to 2-day event, combining both the June Council meeting and the above matter, with the possibility of external facilitation, if necessary. Upon consideration of various dates proposed, it was agreed that a poll would be circulated to Council members of the date options available, following which the meeting would be rearranged and further details of venue and agendas to be confirmed.

5.0. Minutes & Matters Arising

5.1. Minutes of March Meeting:

The Minutes of the March meeting were considered to be an accurate record thereof and were formally approved by Council.

Resolution: That Council approves the draft minutes of the Council meeting of 23 March 2023.

Proposed: Jimmy Jordan

Seconded: Pat Fleming

Carried without dissent

5.2. Matters Arising

Regarding item 7.1.9 in the Director's Report to the March meeting, it was requested that further discussion on the matter be deferred while third party discussions on the report are ongoing. The Director will formally write to the Chief Fire Officer of the Dublin Fire Brigade requesting other relevant reports for future consideration, from a regulatory perspective.

6.0. Director's Report

6.1 Director's Report to Council

6.1.1. COVID-19 Arrangements

There were no further developments to report.

6.1.2. Staff Recruitment Update

The Deputy Director post and that of the Finance Officer are currently open for applications. The post of Head of Registration/Registrar awaits approval for the DoH. The post of Secretary to Council is being tendered as an independent contractor through an open tender process.

6.1.3. Meeting with the Department of Health

A number of topics were reviewed at a recent Quarterly Governance meeting with the DoH on 5th April last. Prioritised posts required to be filled were agreed in principle, along with provisional support of the proposed PHECC staffing structure. The approval of funding of possible future projects was discussed, along with the ongoing Assessor Panel “deep-dive” audit and PHECC legislation.

6.1.4. PHECC Audits

The Internal Audit programme for 2023 has commenced with a review of governance. As a result of the IPA Governance review and other initiatives, it is hoped that all documentation requested by the auditors will be available. Interviews are being arranged with the Chair of Council, the Secretary to Council, the Director and the Chair of FRACC. In regard to the E-Y “deep-dive” audit of Assessor Panel arrangements, a number of queries remain to be resolved prior to the receipt of the final report into the matter.

6.1.5. Review of PHECC Appeals Process

It was agreed that a detailed review of the current PHECC Appeal process be conducted focusing on the composition of the panel, appeal outcome, legal representation and overall management of the process to ensure that the panel are not restricted in carrying out their role.

6.1.6. Independent Review into handling of Sexual Abuse Issues in SJA

The Director reported on a recent meeting with the Commissioner of the St. John Ambulance Ireland [SJA], in relation to the above report. The abuses identified in the Review all predated PHECC’s existence and therefore could not have involved PHECC Registrants, however, as a Licensed CPG Service Provider voluntarily registered with PHECC, SJA are obliged to comply with PHECC GVF Standards. Consideration of the Review’s recommendations concluded that significant change was underway in relation to the governance of the organisation. A further follow-up meeting will take place between PHECC and SJA later in the year.

6.1.7. 2023 Determination – Budgets & Business Plan

The budget planning process for 2023 has been completed in line with earlier advices and section budgets, as tabled, have been reviewed to achieve a break-even position. As anticipated, PHECC will struggle to take on any new projects in 2023 that were not already included in the current PHECC Strategy (2020-2023), however requests will be submitted to the DoH for specific projects and the increased staff complement. Both the Business Plan and Budget for 2023 will be brought to Council for approval at the May meeting.

Hillery Collins departed the meeting.

6.1.8. Council Members’ Expenses

Relevant HR Circulars and legal advice in relation to financial procedures to be followed where staff of one public service body incur expenses arising from work undertaken on behalf of another public service body, were included in the papers for reference. It was clarified that Council, Committee and Sub-Committee members, who are also public sector employees, should claim expenses from their employer, who will, in due course, submit a claim to PHECC to reimburse these claims by way of invoice.

6.2 Delegated Decisions of Director:

The Report was tabled and noted by Council. There were no additional matters arising.

7.0. Secretary Report

7.1 Governance Presentation – 2022

The Secretary tabled a report on Council activity in 2022. This addressed Council, Council Committee and Expert Groups activities and outcomes in detail. The Report will be available as a resource to the Chair, Council Members and Council Committee Chairs in the creation of further stakeholder reports for 2022.

8.0. Registration Report

In line with RUL007 PHECC Registration Rules, Council noted the addition of those individuals detailed in the Registration Report to the PHECC Register, as approved by the Director via delegated decision (Ref. POL049 Delegated Decision of the Director).

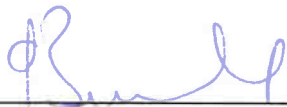
9.0. AOB & Close

The Chair thanked all for attending.

The meeting concluded at approximately 14:15.

The next meeting will take place on May 18th at 10:00hrs.

Signed:



Dr Jacqueline Burke
Chairperson

Date: 18th May 2023