

## **024: DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A NATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATOR SUITE TO ENHANCE THE SERVICE PLANNING PROCESS IN THE IRISH HEALTH SECTOR**

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### **Objective:**

To describe the process of developing and implementing a national suite of Performance indicators that are uniform and comparable within the Irish health system and to use this information to support service-planning processes.

### **Methods:**

The method included a description of processes, key stakeholders and the methods of engagement, the outline of key incremental milestones, analysis and learning.

### **Results:**

Process: A National Performance Indicator Project Team was established in 1999 representative of all of the statutory Health Boards / Authorities. The National Project Team in turn developed 14 'Working Groups' based on a number of defined care groups / service areas. The mandate of the Working Groups was to develop a national suite of Performance Indicators for each of the defined care groups or service areas, based on communication and consultation with service providers / staff using an agreed national set of guidance criteria.

The National Project Team provides both a quality assurance role and a governance structure to the working groups.

During 2003 and 2004, the Performance Indicator reports have been used in conjunction with other reporting mechanisms as an indicative picture of a Health Board's position in relation to the delivery of its Service Plan, and to monitor and track progress on the National Health Strategy *Quality and Fairness* as part of the overall monitoring process.

The initiative progressed from 1999 to successful and sustained implementation of the initial Performance Indicator suite in 2001 and 2002, with the project being expanded in a significant way to directly involve officials from the Department of Health and Children.

In recognition of the fact that the Performance Indicator process was a key enabler to the development of a standardised service plan within the health sector, the brief of the National Performance Indicator Project Team was expanded to include the development of a national template for Service Planning. During 2003, the first national template was agreed and implemented with respect to 2004 service plans. The 2004 service plans have now been reviewed and evaluated. This revised national template will now form the basis for a single national service plan in 2005 as the Irish health system embarks on its first major reform in over 30 years.

An evaluation of the Performance Indicator process has also been completed in 2004. The findings have led to an enhanced understanding of how PIs should link in with Service Planning and performance monitoring generally within the Irish health sector.

### **Conclusion:**

The development of the national suite of performance indicators and a national service planning template has highlighted the need for agreed minimum datasets for each care group / service area, from which performance indicators and key performance indicators can be developed. The process of standardising our approach to PIs and Service Planning has fostered the development of a performance culture within the Irish health sector, and this will be a critical success factor for the current reform programme underway.