Health

Improving Healthcare Delivery, Supporting
Our Front Line Healthcare Workers

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Ireland's healthcare system is increasingly unable to meet demand and Irish citizens frequently wait months or years for necessary procedures. Hospital beds are chronically in short supply and primary care staff are overwhelmed by their workload. The bottom line is we need more doctors, nurses, and hospitals. This means we need more funding and competent management of the HSE to ensure that funding is well spent. We recognize the problem and propose we:

Fixing the Shortage of Healthcare Professionals
- **Increase salaries of primary care doctors and nurses** to ensure they remain in Ireland;
- **Provide forgivable, interest-free loans** for Irish students to study medicine with an attached agreement that they practice in Ireland for seven years after completing their education, otherwise the subsidies must be repaid;
- **Subsidise rental of state-owned accommodation for healthcare professionals** on low wages for a period of up to five years following entry to service;
- **Increase the number of medicines a pharmacist can prescribe** to reduce demand on doctors;

Addressing the Hospital Bed Shortage
- Introduce a new healthcare model to allow for **24/7 treatment** – we already know this is possible because private hospitals operate on this system;
- **Increase funding to smaller, regional hospitals** that can provide urgent and routine care to people who do not reside in large cities – that is 45% of the population;
  o This will also alleviate pressure large hospitals in urban centres;
- Establish public-private partnerships to help **shorten wait-times** for medical care;
- Introduce a **reimbursement scheme for Republic of Ireland private hospitals** and continue the Northern Ireland reimbursement program;
- Maintain and increase funding for **community hospitals**;
- **Expand use of elective surgery units** to prevent cancellations and backlog;

Supporting Young People and Carers
- **Abolish means testing for carers;**
- Include **nutrition education** in school curriculum to reduce preventable illnesses;
- Restore **funding for the school dentist** to prevent long-term dental problems;

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Implementing Effective Oversight of the Healthcare System
- Create watchdog, independent of HSE, to ensure **accountability by HSE** and hospital management;
- Ensure **criminal prosecution for cover ups** by HSE and hospital personnel;
- Include **ethics component** to medical education;
- Strengthen **whistleblower protection** legislation;
- **Restore accountability** in the Ministry of Health. No longer should the minister be able hide behind the line that the HSE is an independent statutory body;"
- Make the **Minister for Health directly answerable** for delivery of services and ensuring transparent and effective healthcare for all;

Reforming Medical Card Issuance
- Automatically **issue medical cards to patients undergoing cancer treatment** for the duration of their treatment;
- **Curtail issue of medical cards to IPAS applicants;**

Modernising Mental Health and Eldercare Services
- Introduce **outpatient mental health respite facilities**, to address the gap between acute admission and community care;
- **Increase grants for nursing homes** to remain in compliance and prevent nursing home closures;
- Add **dementia units** to community hospitals.