

PRESS RELEASE
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Susie Long Hospice Fund meets Minister for Health, Dr James Reilly, to progress hospice campaign

Members of the Susie Long Hospice Fund Steering Committee met with Dr James Reilly, Minister for Health, and Mr Phil Hogan, TD, Minister for the Environment, to discuss their ongoing campaign to build a hospice in Kilkenny for the people of Carlow and Kilkenny.

The meeting was organised by Minister Hogan to provide an opportunity for the Susie Long Hospice Fund Committee to inform Minister Reilly of their campaign, to outline the inequity of palliative care provision that exists nationally in Ireland, with the South-East being most under-served, and to ask his advice on how they can progress their campaign to make the goal of a 12-bed hospice in Kilkenny a reality.

The main points raised by the Susie Long Hospice Fund Committee included:

- The South-East has the lowest per capita Government spend on palliative care at EUR7.90pp compared with EUR35.00pp in the North-West;
- Despite official Government policy set 10 years ago recommending one hospice bed per 100,000 population, the South-East still has NO hospice beds;
- The local community of Kilkenny and Carlow have expressed their ongoing support for the hospice campaign by raising EUR550,000 to date through hundreds of fundraising events;
- The Susie Long Hospice Fund has been meeting with St Luke's Hospital and Eugene Murray of the Irish Hospice Foundation for the last two years to progress the hospice campaign;
- The Day Services Unit at St Luke's Hospital, to include a dedicated colonoscopy unit, promised to Susie Long in 2007 by the then Minister for Health, Mary Harney, has still not been built;

Speaking after the meeting, Malcolm Noonan, Chairperson of the Susie Long Hospice Fund Committee, stated "We are very grateful to Minister James Reilly for meeting us today. We feel that this was a very productive meeting. Minister Reilly acknowledged the stark reality that the South-East is severely under-served in terms of palliative care provision and that he is supportive of our campaign. He did state that finance remains a significant challenge, but he has undertaken to consider our campaign and meet us again in the near future to advise us of any progress he may be able to make".

The Susie Long Hospice Fund (SLHF) was set up in October 2007 to provide the highest possible quality of end-of-life care for patients and their families through the establishment of a 12-bed hospice in Kilkenny, for the people of Kilkenny and Carlow. The Fund plans to meet this challenge through fundraising, increasing awareness of the need and benefits of local hospice care and by lobbying Government for support. Donations can be made directly to the fund at AIB, High St, Kilkenny, Account No: 3462705, Sort code: 93-31-98. The Susie Long Hospice Fund is a registered charity, number CHY17950. Further details from www.susielonghospice.com

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