

# **The story of Roscommon Hospital**

**Address by Senator Frank Feighan**

**National Health Summit, Croke Park Conference Centre, Jones Road, Dublin,  
Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</sup> 2017**

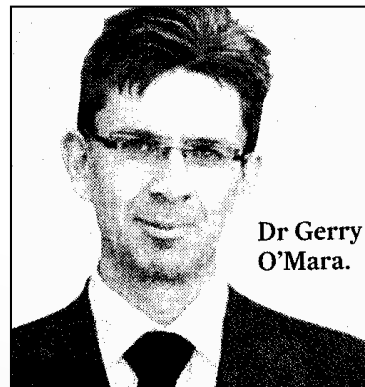


# A crisis building – early 2011

- 1,300 patients per consultant in Roscommon A&E each year, compared to about 500 to 600 patients per consultant at Galway University Hospital
- A&E was unable to deliver the required standard of care
- Consultants wrote to the HSE to say they could no longer stand over patient services and patient safety
- Staffing issues relating to a shortage and quality of junior consultant doctors

# A crisis building – early 2011

- Dr Gerry O' Mara said "locum staff not of "a standard" and "mistakes made".
- "You would always find something had been missed, you had to check everything."
- "The problem with the A & E was that anything could come in at any hour and it got to the stage where the standard of care expected from people, and that needed to be given, we were unable to deliver."



Dr Gerry  
O'Mara.

# From Crisis to Change

## – July 2011

- Proposals to close the A & E and turn Roscommon into a non-acute hospital was the only safe, sustainable way forward for the hospital
- At the end of June 2011, the HSE confirmed the A & E would close from July 2011

# The Politics of Roscommon Hospital

- Sinn Féin tabled a motion to retain emergency services at smaller hospitals
- It was defeated that evening by 96 votes to 47
- I voted for the motion on the need to safeguard patient safety and the future of the hospital itself



# Changes – the fall-out





# Changes – the fall-out

Bullet in your head' threat to TD over hospital vote has changed his life

PUBLISHED  
22/03/2012 | 08:45

Brian O'Reilly  
EMAIL



Roscommon TD Frank Feighan (right)

ROSCOMMON TD Frank Feighan has spoken of how he was threatened with a bullet in the head over his vote to close the A&E department at Roscommon Hospital.

IRISH  
**Mirror**

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"I know the time you leave the house and I see you coming home. You will get a bullet before long."

Fine Gael TD Frank Feighan condemns disturbing letter he received with threats to kill him this morning

f t g+ p 110 SHARES

BY KATHY ARMSTRONG  
16:36, 27 JUL 2015  
UPDATED 18:56, 27 JUL 2015



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# Hospital now safer and busier

- A higher volume of lower complexity cases have moved to the hospital while more complex cases have been moved to larger hospitals
- Since 2011, there has been a 40% cent increase in day procedures and a 25% increase in outpatient activity at Roscommon Hospital



# Hospital now safer and busier

- Existing Emergency Department changed from a 24/7 service to an Urgent Care Centre
- Medical Assessment Unit: Patients referred from their GP and can be safely managed without intensive care
- Enhanced ambulance service: Four emergency ambulances now operate from bases in the county
- Additional Rapid Response Vehicle was deployed in Roscommon from July 11<sup>th</sup>, with advanced paramedics providing 24 hour cover.

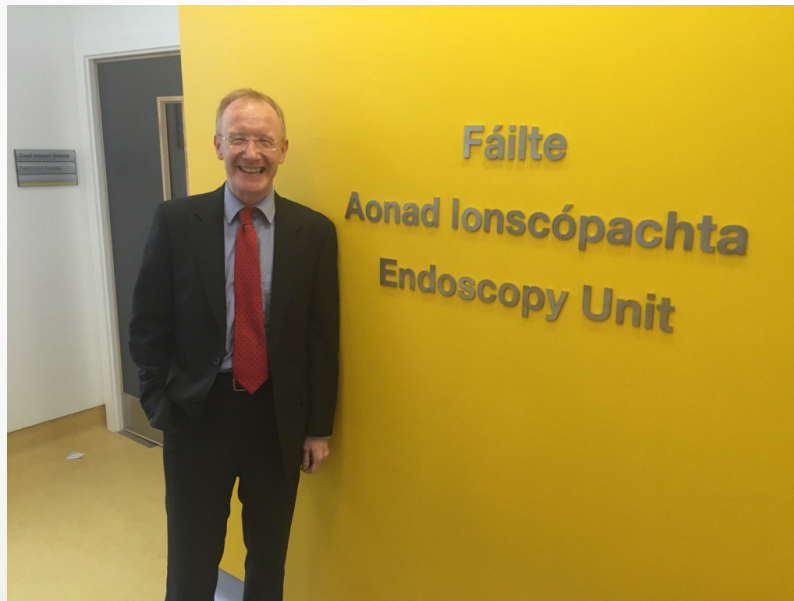
# Hospital now safer and busier

- Services from GUH: Elective day case surgical patients on GUH waiting lists treated in Roscommon Hospital
- New Consultants in Respiratory Medicine, Endocrinology, surgery, anaesthesia have been appointed
- Falls Clinic opened
- Plastic Surgery: Commenced in September 2011 as an outreach service from Galway University Hospitals.
- Outpatient Services: Outreach services from Galway University Hospitals are available in Roscommon Hospital outpatient department in respect of ENT, Respiratory, Endocrinology and Diabetes

# €20m capital developments

## Endoscopy Unit

Opened in 2016



# €20m capital developments

## Medical Rehabilitation Unit

Satellite centre to the NRC Hospital, Dublin

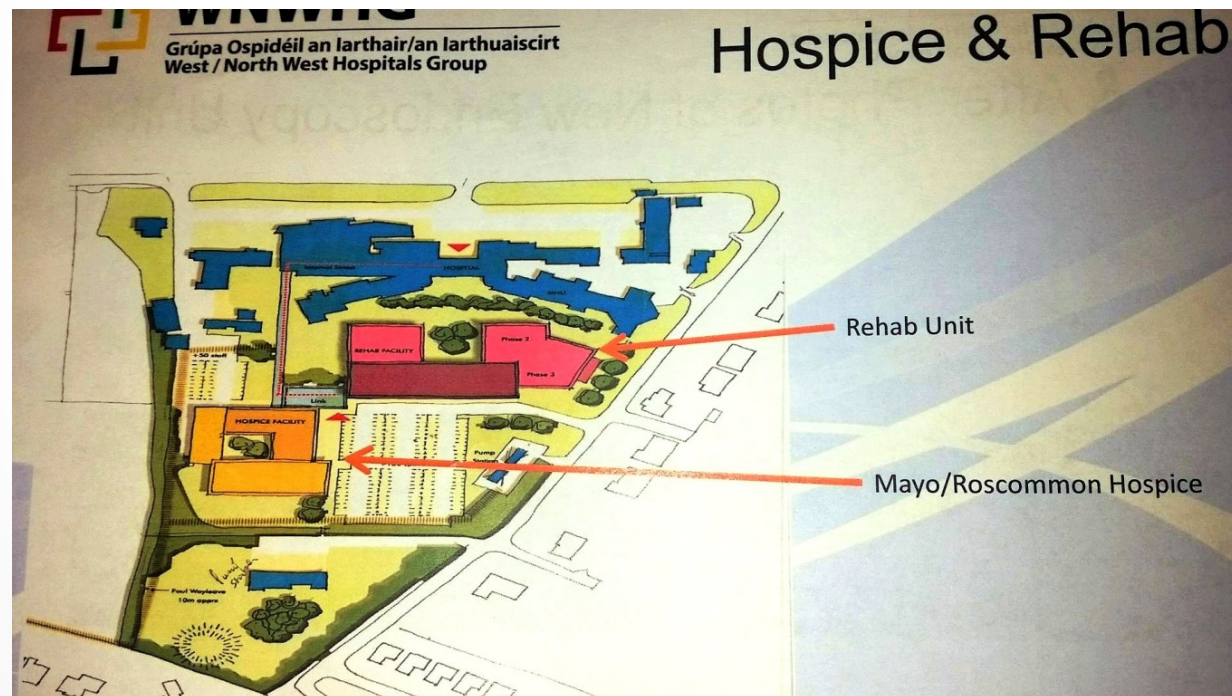




# €20m capital developments

## Palliative Care Centre

8 bedded Hospice on the grounds of RCH



# Air ambulance





# Vindicated

Roscommon People Friday 25 December 2015

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NewsPeople

## Liam McMullen: 'Don't be fooled by promises to restore A&E'

Top Consultant Surgeon Liam McMullen says he has apologised to 'vilified' Frank Feighan – and issues pre-election warning to voters

CONSULTANTS SPEAK OUT FOR THE FIRST TIME

### Hospital delivering a much 'safer service'

BY MARESA FAGAN

PATIENTS ARE receiving a safer service since the closure of the emergency department and the redevelopment of Roscommon County Hospital as a model 2 facility. That's according to consultants at the hospital who, for the first time, have spoken openly and frankly about the hospital issues and risks facing the hospital more than two years ago when the Emergency Department (ED) was closed.

Speaking to the *Herald* general physician and geriatrician Dr Gerry O'Mara and surgeon Mr Liam

McMullen said the hospital now offered a safer service for patients.

"The problem with the A&E was that anything could come in at any hour and it got to the stage where the standard of care expected from people, and that needed to be given, we were unable to deliver," Dr O'Mara said, adding that the facility did not have the doctors and specialties required.

"If you can't run a service that you would want to use yourself then something has to change," Dr O'Mara stressed, adding that his medical colleagues were in broad agreement that services could not be sustained.

Two and a half years on and Dr

O'Mara said that he could stand over the service now provided and that patients could be assured of a safer service. "We feel now that what we are doing we are doing safely," Dr O'Mara said.

Mr McMullen, a consultant surgeon at the hospital, echoed the sentiments and said that on a safety record the hospital was "working well".

Both also feel that distance ED should not be an issue appropriate ambulance emergency response is in

For full story see pages 32 & 33.

### Patients are now safer – hospitals consultants

PATIENTS ARE now safer following the closure of the emergency department and the development of the county hospital as a Model 2 facility, according to consultants at Roscommon County Hospital.

General physician and geriatrician Dr Gerry O'Mara and surgeon Mr Liam McMullen said that changes at the hospital over the past two and a half years had resulted in a safer service for patients.

Speaking to the *Herald* last week both consultants also said that distance from an Emergency Department (ED) should not be an issue if the appropriate ambulance and emergency response is in place.

According to Dr O'Mara issues arose at the ED in 2008 or 2009. Issues then came to a head from 2010 onwards when a shortage of junior doctors compounded

"The problem with the A&E was that anything could come in at any hour and it got to the stage where the standard of care expected from people, and that needed to be given, we were unable to deliver," Dr O'Mara said, adding that the

facility did not have the doctors and specialties required.

"If you can't run a service that you would want to use yourself then something has to change,"

– Dr. O'Mara

"If you can't run a service that you would want to use yourself then something has to change," Dr O'Mara said, adding that his medical colleagues were in broad agreement that services could not be sustained.

Retaining a 12-hour ED as initially proposed, he added, "The problem wasn't the hours it was the type of patient coming through; we were getting really sick patients that we couldn't handle."

Two and a half years on and Dr O'Mara says that he could stand over the service now provided and that patients could be assured of a safer service.

"We feel now that what we are doing we are doing safely," Dr O'Mara said.

"If you can't run a service that you would want to use yourself then something has to change,"

surgeon at the hospital, echoed these sentiments and said that on a safety record the hospital was "working very well". He pointed out that keeping the ED would have required the appointment of three ED consultants and a lot of additional staff to bring it up to standard.

Asked whether patients were now safer in Roscommon following the closure of the ED, he said it was a question of transport resources.

"It depends on your transport. I said that at the time, if you put it properly safe," Mr McMullen said.

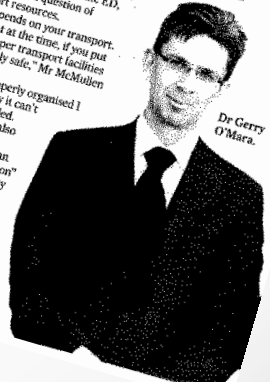
"If it's properly organised I don't see why it can't work," he added.

Dr O'Mara also hailed the air ambulance as "an invaluable addition" and critical "safety umbrella", which had saved lives to date and should be established on a permanent basis.

"I think it would be a serious mistake if the helicopter service was taken away. We've

had incidents where we've had to call on the helicopter and without the service I'm sure patients would have died," he said.

"It is a very useful safety umbrella. It has certainly reassured people and we've seen it work extremely well in certain situations," he said.



Dr Gerry O'Mara.

# Roscommon Hospital

A shining example for smaller hospitals





Thank you