

Letter to the Editor, Irish Times 19th November 2010

Cutbacks in mental health services

From Faculty of Social & Rehabilitation Psychiatry

Madam,

A return to an institutional model of mental health care is the inevitable consequence of the HSE cost cutting plans referred to by Eithne Donnellan (Home News, November 15th).

Evidence shows that those with the most enduring and disabling mental health problems and complex needs optimise their chance of a return to a decent quality of life when Rehabilitation and Recovery Mental Health Teams are available to them. It is our view that the “disbandment of specialist teams for treating those with severe and enduring mental illnesses” by the HSE is both short sighted and certainly a backward step. More critically, it denies the fundamental civil right to appropriate healthcare by those who can poorly articulate for themselves, and flies in the face of national social inclusion policies.

This proposal will not save money. The human costs will be substantial in terms of burden on service users and their families. Savings must be made, but should this be at the expense of one of the most vulnerable groups in our community?

Yours,

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