



**The College of Psychiatry of Ireland**  
*Coláiste Síciatrachta na hÉireann*

Dear Sir,

In response to ‘HSE cuts number of psychiatrists in Galway’ (HEALTHplus, 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2011), ‘Revealing the horrific past of psychiatric hospitals’ (Mary Raftery ,5<sup>th</sup> September) and ‘Behind the Walls’ (RTE, 5<sup>th</sup> September).

The first episode of ‘*Behind the Walls*’ (RTE, 5<sup>th</sup> September) is a powerful reminder that meeting the needs of the most vulnerable in our society requires attention both to the basic human aspirations and rights which we all share as well as appropriate professional support in managing enduring mental illness.

Rehabilitation psychiatry, the application of specialist knowledge and resources to support those with the most complex mental health needs was developed in Ireland to shift care away from the institutions featured in Mary Raftery’s article (5<sup>th</sup> September) and RTE’s ‘*Behind the Walls*’ to more humane and individual support. Rehabilitative care provided by specialist Rehabilitation and Recovery teams has been shown to represent the best model of care for the prevention of disability both within and outside ‘the Walls’.

Mental health services in Ireland are undergoing fundamental change, in particular in the growing acceptance of personal recovery as the priority in how care is organised and delivered. However, there is a real risk of a return to institutional provision for the most vulnerable due to the persistent erosion of community based mental health teams as reported most recently in your newspaper (‘HSE cuts number of psychiatrists in Galway’, HEALTHplus, 6<sup>th</sup> September) which includes the only Rehabilitation and Recovery team in that county.

It appears inevitable that those individuals with the most enduring mental health difficulties and with the greatest needs will continue to be neglected.

Yours, etc

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