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For immediate release:

Nurses Association Critical of Minister's Omission Of General Practice Nurses As Frontline Healthcare Workers

Nurses Association Slam Minister's Omission Of General Practice Nurses As Frontline Healthcare Workers

The Irish General Practice Nurses Educational Association (IGPNEA) has heavily criticised the Minister for Finance Paschal Donohue TD, who said on *Prime Time* (Thursday 20th January) that General Practice Nurses (GPNs) were not frontline healthcare workers.

Mary Jordan, IGPNEA Chairperson, said that their membership was furious with the Minister's remarks, which she said completely misrepresented the vital role that GPNs have played, and continue to play, in battling the Covid-19 pandemic.

"I would call on the Minister to withdraw his remarks, on national tv, which show a complete lack of respect, and a total lack of understanding, of the work that GPNs do on the frontline of the health service during this most challenging of times," she said.

Ms Jordan went on to highlight the critical element which GPNs delivered in terms of the country's vaccination rollout. "The Minister is obviously completely unaware that 100% of Covid-19 vaccines given to the most vulnerable cohort of patients, those aged 80 years and over were delivered in General Practice; that 50% of the vaccines delivered across the country to all age groups were delivered by General Practice Nurses, and our membership have let their feelings be known to me today in relation to the ill-informed views that the Minister expressed on Thursday night's *Prime Time*," she added.

GPNs are proud to say that we continued to care for our patients throughout this pandemic. When patients presented with injuries that required immediate attention we did not stop to ascertain their Covid vaccine status prior to treatment. When patients attended with exacerbations of life limiting conditions too fearful to attend a hospital we did not turn them away. We worked tirelessly to keep ourselves and our patients and colleagues safe in order to keep our practices open.

General Practice Nurses are also to the fore of many other elements of healthcare delivery across the country, including delivering community-based healthcare across multiple settings and supporting GP's across the country.

Writing in the Irish Medical Times on January 17th, GP Brendan O'Shea described the impact of General Practice Nurses, saying they were among; "*the most productive and efficient nursing colleagues in the healthcare system. Practically everything they do is documented with an unparalleled level of efficiency and transparency, given that all of their professional activities are conducted on linked electronic medical record systems. Together with GPs, they are unique in this regard within the broader health system.*" He added that they could deliver even more to the healthcare system if adequately resourced.

“Considering the work that our membership does, and the scope we have to develop into an even more effective function of the healthcare service, the Minister’s comments were particularly hurtful and ill-considered,” concluded Mary Jordan.

About the IGPNEA

The **Irish General Practice Nurses Educational Association** has grown steadily over the years. There are 18 Branches nationwide and a National Executive Committee (NEC) of volunteer GPNs who oversee the role and function of the organisation and its members.

There are currently over 2,000 General Practice Nurses in Ireland, approximately 1400 nurse whole time equivalents, who play a pivotal role in healthcare and provide an extensive range of clinical interventions and services to patients in General Practice. General Practice Nurses are presented with an ever increasing range of conditions and patient needs as the role is constantly changing and evolving. The roles of the General Practice Nurse are many and varied and include but are not limited to, immunisations, cervical screening, chronic disease management; asthma, COPD, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, nurse prescribing, medication administration, phlebotomy, weight management, smoking cessation services, women’s health, men’s health, dermatology, wound management, travel vaccinations, cryotherapy, aural care and ear irrigation, triage, health promotion, counselling, as well as follow up, referrals and liaising with other HCPs, conducting clinical audits, developing practice protocols, coding of health conditions, maintenance of emergency equipment and are involved in practice staff education.

The Association receives no funding from the government to carry out its role in the further education of its members in General Practice Nursing.
ALL EDUCATION undertaken by GPNs is done on their own time and at their own expense.

Partnership, Excellence, Advocacy, Collaboration

The aim of the IPGNEA is that every General Practice Nurse in Ireland will have equal access to appropriate quality education and that the specialist role of the General Practice Nurse will be recognised, acknowledged, and valued.

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