

5 more years of Harney's cuts?

FIGHT FOR FREE PUBLIC HEALTHCARE! End Limerick's Dialysis Crisis



The new government is set to continue the old policies; underfunding healthcare and creating a US-style, for-profit health system. This will only worsen the crisis and must be resisted. The current scandal here in Limerick of people having to travel long distances for dialysis underlines this.

For years now the government and HSE have been aware that the dialysis machine in Limerick Regional Hospital is over worked and that one or more new machines are desperately needed. They refused to act, putting costs before service. Now people are forced to travel to Tullamore, Kilkenny or Tralee a few times a week to receive vital dialysis.

This cost cutting shows the true cause of the health crisis: a dire lack of facilities, staff and investment. Government propaganda has tried to label health as a 'black-hole' where money goes in but the service doesn't improve. This is an attempt by them to get off the hook and put the blame on health workers. It is completely untrue.

The reality is recent spending has fallen far short of what is needed. Ireland has been playing catch-up with the rest of Europe since the 1980's when well over 3,000 beds were taken out of the system.

The government's own health strategy in 2001 said that 3,000 new beds were urgently needed in the health service. This was an underestimation and the real figure is probably nearer 5,000. However, 6 years later only 789 beds have actually been delivered.



- **18,000 hospital beds in the 1980s - only 12,000 now!**
- **Now people in Limerick must travel to Kilkenny for dialysis every week!**
- **New government giving land & tax breaks to help for-profit healthcare!**

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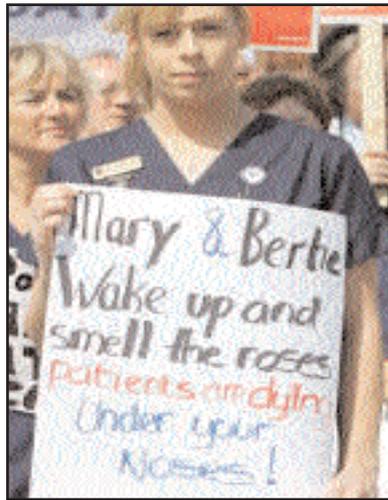
A two-tier system

Rather than building a free comprehensive health service the government have been more concerned with supporting the development of the private health sector at the expense of the public system. Now the government is giving public land to private hospitals, along with huge grants and tax breaks. This will only worsen the two tier health system where it is money ,not need, which dictates who gets treated.

All the establishment parties support this idea. Now even the Greens have sold-out those who voted for them looking for an alternative. The Greens seem to be going quietly along with Fianna Fail's privatisation agenda. The only force that can make the government backdown is a united campaign of health workers and other working class people.

The 'Opposition' - we need a real alternative

The supposed 'opposition' of Fine Gael/Labour want even more market control of health and when last in government they too underfunded public health care and supported the development of the two-tier system. Similarly, none of the establishment parties supported the nurses in their recent struggle.



The Socialist Party has consistently fought for a free public health service. Whilst all the establishment parties lined up to attack the nurses, we supported their campaign. We believe the trade unions have a crucial role to play in building a movement to oppose the dialysis crisis here in Limerick and the wider health crisis. Already thousands of people have taken to the streets of Letterkenny and in Monaghan protesting at a shortage of resources. This shows that a movement can be built, if a leadership is given.

The Socialist Party believes that the crises that afflict our society in the health services, education, housing and social infrastructure could all be eradicated if society was organised for the needs of people not the profit of big business and the rich.

The Socialist Party believes workers and young people, can't rely on any of the establishment parties. None of them represent us. Ordinary people must get organised to fight the new government's right-wing agenda. We actively campaign for a socialist alternative to the crises that afflict our society. Join us in that struggle!

If you want to find out more, then contact us today by phone, text, email or post....

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the Socialist Party says:

Build a campaign of patients, health staff & unions to fight for:

● **One or more extra dialysis machines in Limerick; dialysis services in day time hours for all who need them!**

● **Emergency measures to provide extra beds and staff to end the A&E crisis and the waiting lists!**

● **End the abuse of the public system by private medicine; scrap the two-tier health service!**

● **For a fully comprehensive, public health service, including GPs & prescription medicine!**