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**To:- EANA**

**CC:-**

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### **Impact of the Recession in Ireland**

The impact of the recession has had considerable impact on the health system in Ireland.

The Health Insurance Authority in Ireland published a report in June earlier this year highlighting that 67,000 people holding private insurance dropped their cover between 2008 and June this year.

This has placed increased pressure on the public health care system, and reduced the income of doctors in private practice.

### **Profiling GPs and General Practice**

The IMO is establishing a GP Health Index which will track health trends in the population as they are presenting to GP surgeries. There will be a rotating sample of 100 practices, and GPs will have the opportunity to opt-out if they do not wish to participate. The project is due to commence shortly.

### **GP Workload Study**

A questionnaire was issued to GP practices earlier this year, to understand the distribution of work in General Practice. The data gathered in this survey will provide valuable insight into what changes have been experienced in workload amongst GPs and their staff. The results of the study are due to be presented to the membership shortly.

### **Reduction in Income**

As reported in the last national report, both consultants and GP's in Ireland have taken imposed cuts to their professional fees resulting in a loss of income.

Additionally, there have been reports of decreases in GP visitations, particularly from those who are not covered by a Medical Card or by Private Insurance. This population has been increasing due to the financial crisis in Ireland and people opting out of Private Insurance.

### **Workforce**

The IMO has sought an urgent meeting with the HSE to discuss the NCHD shortage in Ireland. The current number of shortages is approximately 160 and the IMO has surveyed members to ascertain the impact of this shortage. This has implications on working rosters, and contingency planning needs to be assured. The IMO is requesting details of predicted shortages and contingency plans from the HSE as a matter of urgency, particularly given the timeframe of the January changeover of NCHD contracts.

### **Consultant Contract**

As many of you may be aware, most consultants in Ireland have a contract with the Government where they have to split their time between public duties and private practice. The IMO is continuing to engage with the HSE in regards to outstanding issues around the implementation



of the 2008 Consultant Contract, particularly in regards to the calculation of the mix of public/private practice appointments.

### **Representation of GPs**

The IMO is still in discussions with the Government in order to make appropriate changes to the Competition Act and a transformation agenda for GPs. This is an ongoing issue, and we will inform the group of any changes.