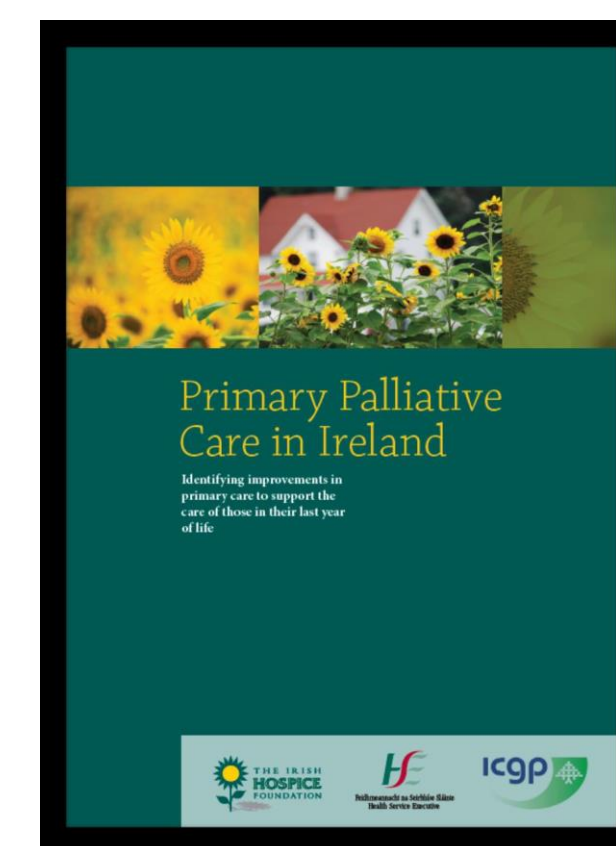




Baseline Measure: Access to Specialist Palliative Care Advice Out of Hours



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Background:

The HSE Three Year Development Framework (2017) recommends mapping current practice regarding 24-hour availability of specialist advice, extending Specialist Palliative Care (SPC) community-based services over a seven day week and indicates the need for an appropriate delivery model.

Already, many SPC services provide out of hours (OOH) telephone advice services that are operated from inpatient units. However, little is known about these services and the calls received. Therefore there is a need to clarify access to SPC advice and information from SPC services OOH (IHF, 2011 & HSE 2017).

Aim:

To gather baseline information about calls received from GPs to SPC Consultants OOH in a hospice and general hospital where no local hospice is in operation.



Method:

- A baseline measure was developed using information retrieved from existing literature relating to the evaluation of other OOH SPC telephone advice systems.
- A leader from each site was responsible for gathering information over a six month period relating to GP to SPC consultant calls OOH (from 17.00-08.00).

Results:

- 10 phone calls in total were received by both services
- Five calls related to patients with dementia
- Two calls related to patients with cancer.
- Over the six month period 2 calls were received by one service from a part of the country not serviced by a SPC inpatient unit.



Conclusion:

The findings represent a snapshot of the nature of calls received by SPC services out of hours that could assist in the development of a national standard relating to the provision of SPC advice out of hours.

As per the HSE Three Year Development Framework (2017) a complete mapping of current practice regarding 24 hour availability of SPC advice is required.

Next Steps:

Next steps may include:

1. Informing GPs about local SPC advice systems and repeating the baseline measure to measure impact of informing GPs, and
2. Continue gathering data in other SPC sites around the country.

