

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



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Your Ref:
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Dear Colleagues

REBUILDING HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

Following on from my commitment to update you all following the weekly meeting of the Management Board, please find below my update following the Management Board meeting on Wednesday 16 September 2020 which considered a range of issues.

The Board received an overview from the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer following the commissioning of a Rapid Review, which captures the changes to pharmacy services implemented across the Health and Social Care sector during the first wave of the pandemic. The review makes a number of recommendations for actions needed to prepare for subsequent waves of the pandemic and inform changes needed to support the longer term rebuilding of HSC services which will be submitted for my consideration. The Board also received an overview of the further development of Intermediate Care Services in NI, including a regional approach to performance management.

The Board also considered proposals contained in the Northern Ireland Ophthalmic Services Rebuilding action plan (both for primary and secondary care) on how, through the establishment of a regional Northern Ireland Eyecare network, gaps that have arisen prior to, and as a result of, the Covid-19 pandemic, could be addressed. The Board agreed the proposals as a basis for moving forward and agreed to keep these under review as they progress.

The Board further received a presentation on the 'StopCOVIDNI' and 'COVIDCare NI' apps. The Board noted the significant uptake of the apps in Northern Ireland. The Board also received an update on Testing, Track and Trace, noting the increased demand for testing in recent weeks. In parallel, the Contact Tracing Service has seen an increase in workload in recent weeks as the number of close contacts per case has risen.

The Board also received an update on guidance on hospital and care homes visiting in the context of Covid-19.

I trust that you find this update helpful and I look forward to our continuing discussion on the vitally important work of rebuilding HSC services in the weeks and months ahead.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robin Swann', written in a cursive style.

Robin Swann MLA
Minister of Health