



Mercy | times

“Who we are together is as important as what we do”

Catherine McAuley

Like the generations of Mercy Care givers before us – awareness of the need and immediacy of the response is a way of life for us. As Covid-19 escalated into a global pandemic, Ireland began to galvanize its response in early March and Mercy University Hospital adapted its services and building to become a Covid-19 receiving hospital.

In collaboration with the HSE, the wider Hospital network, UCC, the Defence Forces, Cork City Council and so many contractors and agencies, we made maximum use of our hospital site and all facilities to support our patients, our staff and our wider community during the Covid-19 pandemic. Our colleagues in general practice and primary care worked closely with the hospital in helping to care for patients throughout our community.

In an address to all staff, CEO, **Sandra Daly** acknowledged the unprecedented situation we as a hospital, community and nation found ourselves facing and the unwavering dedication of our staff throughout:

“This pandemic has infiltrated every aspect of our personal and professional lives and is impacting every one of us more than we could have ever envisaged a few short weeks ago. It is important that during these times we stay grounded, connected and maintain our resilience. You are not facing this alone and we are stronger together than individually.

I am truly grateful for your ongoing service and exemplar commitment which are an embodiment of the Mercy Values during these uncertain times. What is certain is

that we do have some way to go yet to emerge from this crisis and I am absolutely confident that we will collectively meet that challenge.”

We took our journey together with our patients and their families, our community partners and all of our staff and contractors across every department and every discipline and the following pages will give you a little insight into this chapter in our history.



MUH CEO
Sandra Daly

There is more inside ...

- Living our Values
- Mercy Moments!
- Celebrating Nursing
- Recipe
- Retirements



Credit Joe Noonan

Editor's Note

Welcome to the 32nd edition of Mercy Times. Originally destined to go to print in March, we had to defer this edition as our collective attention and endeavors turned to Covid-19. This edition will try to capture as much of the work, the generosity, the team spirit and compassion that shaped our lives across the last 12-16 weeks.

It is not possible to acknowledge everyone individually so this edition is dedicated to the 1400 staff of Mercy University Hospital, our wider community for their support and for keeping us safe, our civic partners, our colleagues across the HSE, GP's, Primary Care etc and especially our patients, their families and all those who put their trust in "the Mercy" over the last few months. Covid-19 has not gone away but across these pages you will see that whatever will come next, we are ready!

Mercy Times serves as our Hospital Annals and prior to the outbreak of Covid-19, we did have the opportunity to celebrate and recognize our staff in many different ways. We have included some of those moments here as this represents true Mercy Spirit – how we were, are and continue to be!

Stay safe.

Siobhán Kenny

(On behalf of the Mercy Times Editorial Team)

Did you know?

In 1832, Ireland was gripped by another pandemic – **Cholera!**

Building on their social and educational work, the Sisters of Mercy offered their services to the Board of Health to help alleviate the suffering of the Cholera victims in Dublin city.

A Cholera Hospital was opened on Townsend Street and the Board *"immediately and unanimously resolved to send its cordial thanks to the Sisters of Mercy and inform them that the Depot in Townsend Street has been opened and that their attendance, co-operation and consolation will be gratefully accepted"*.

So began the health ministry of Mercy!



Cholera Hospital, Townsend Street

Excellence

From the outset, goals were set by the MUH Covid-19 Management Team who convened daily to ensure our services were configured appropriately for new ways of operating so that we could constructively fulfill our role in the collective inter agency response to this emergency.



Management Team

This included ensuring bed and staff capacity in preparation for a surge in Covid-19 presentations, to minimise Covid-19 transmission on site, to protect our healthcare workers and to preserve essential healthcare systems functioning in the hospital. This is what happened next:

- Our Clinical colleagues immediately adapted their working relationships creating Ward Teams and developed new pathways through ED and onwards across the hospital to protect Covid-19 and Non Covid-19 patients.
- The MUH Occupational Health Department introduced various measures, extended their working hours and increased their workforce to ensure staff had access at all times in respect of concerns, queries and testing.
- Our Infection Control Team commenced education and training programmes in “donning and doffing” PPE across all disciplines, hand hygiene etc and extended this training to the wider community.
- The hospital’s OPD Department was converted to a Swabbing Clinic and staff relocated and upskilled to accommodate the need.
- The MUH Procurement Department set about the task of sourcing protective equipment and keeping the hospital’s supply chain in motion.
- Household Services together with Noonan Services undertook an enhanced cleaning regime across all Mercy sites and introduced safety signage across the campus. Our Catering Team redesigned the Canteen space to ensure appropriate physical distancing was possible whilst maintaining the same quality standard for patients and staff.
- HR ensured that staffing levels were sustained whilst protecting vulnerable employees. Together with our IT Department remote working was facilitated immediately to ensure business continuity, especially for our Finance Department.
- Our HSCP colleagues adapted their roles to provide invaluable support across Ward areas and were visible and active across social media platforms on the HSCP eHealth Advisory Group.
- Carpentry services remodelled many facilities across the hospital including ED and Microbiology to facilitate the arrival of new chemical testing cabinets.
- Consultant colleagues and Medical Secretaries re-engineered critical appointments and maintained contact with patients throughout.
- The Department of Nursing led out Facilitated Focused Training-Enhanced Communication Skills in this COVID Pandemic. This training was designed to help and support clinicians in their difficult and challenging conversations with patients and their loved ones and supported staff in taking a skilled, sensitive and patient-centred approach to all communication with patients and their loved ones.
- Communication was key across the organization and keeping all staff up to date was critical. Town Hall meetings were hosted via Zoom and a dedicated email address was created for queries and concerns. A daily communiqué issued with important advice and pertinent information.
- Caring for each other during this unprecedented time was paramount. A Staff Welfare Group was established with expert guidance from the hospital’s Clinical Psychologist in line with global best practice. Resources were made available to staff including a dedicated helpline.

Excellence

So many areas across the hospital had to adapt their work environment, change their ways and hours of working and some even had to change their location all within a short timeframe! Here we focus on two of those areas, namely our Microbiology Laboratory and St. Therese’s Ward (Oncology Unit). James O’Connor and Majella Cahill gave Mercy Times a glimpse of their respective Covid-19 experience.

“COVID-19 first appeared in Ireland just over three months ago, since then scientists in the Microbiology laboratory of the Mercy have tested thousands of specimens from patients and staff, across two molecular platforms. We were among the earliest sites to begin COVID-19 testing as we had acquired a high-throughput molecular instrument and had a former storage room retrofitted into a molecular laboratory immediately prior to the pandemic. The equipment was purchased from a competitively attained award from the Sláintecare integration fund.

Once we had acquired reagents from our South Korean manufacturer, we spent many long days and weekends getting the testing up and going including an in-depth validation of the new instrumentation and reagents and staff training. We are now testing a large number of samples 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This was made possible through support and input from across the hospital, including but not limited to; Maintenance, Hotel Services, HR, Management, Nursing, Clinical, Clerical and all of our Laboratory colleagues. Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir.”

James O’Connor, Senior Medical Scientist, Microbiology



“The National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) gave a recommendation to all acute hospitals to relocate where possible both their Oncology and Haematology services during Covid-19. This resulted in all of St Therese’s Ward, including its name, transferring to the UCC Brookfield Campus to the Clinical Skills Floor School of Nursing area (or as it is more traditionally known - the School of Nursing practical ward) across a weekend. All staff moved with their Ward including Nursing, NCHD, HCA, Clerical and Catering. The Ward became fully operational on April 6th with 10 patients treated on that first day. Both Medical Oncology and Haematology Day Case chemotherapy is administered on this site under the governance and control of MUH for the duration of Covid-19 and until such time as is deemed safe to return to the hospital campus.

This relocation was no small feat as it involved consultation, engagement and delivery by a multi disciplinary team both in MUH and in UCC in a very short time frame. More importantly it will have a significant impact on MUH patients who have the reassurance of not having to attend an acute hospital at this time.”

Majella Cahill, Assistant Director of Nursing



MUH and UCC staff at Brookfield

The Spirit of Union!

The MUH Technical Services Department together with our civic and public service partners and hospital contractors adapted our buildings, site and local environment to prepare for Covid-19. Two collaborative projects of note changed our landscape...



Tactical Soft Shelters

At the start of April, Defence Force personnel came on site to erect multipurpose Tactical Soft Shelters in support of the regional response to Covid-19 and to maximise our site capability. This formed part of our ongoing preparation.

The Tactical Soft Shelter or Tent was put in place to support our ED Department. This additional sheltered space was provided to assist the ED with additional patient assessment space, facilitate patient flow and further enhance our ability to adhere to social distancing guidelines. The whole process was completed within 24-48 hours and we were truly grateful to the Defence Forces for their assistance in this regard.



Installation of Bulk Oxygen Tanks

In addition to our existing oxygen tank located in the Main Service Yard, a bulk oxygen tank was installed and commissioned on Henry Street. This installation enabled the hospital to provide oxygen therapy which is confirmed as one of the main treatments for patients with Covid-19. The extra tank enabled the hospital to maximize its supply of oxygen.

Its installation was no small feat as a section of Henry Street had to close to traffic resulting in revised traffic management plans. The area had to be prepared, a concrete base embedded and the tank was positioned and installed in line with all safety requirements secured by a fenced off compound. The area was also secured by additional fencing and directional signage to guide pedestrians and traffic appropriately.



Compassion

In the initial days as we had to make the painful decision, in line with government guidance, to close our hospital to visitors we were cognizant of the impact this would have on our patients and their families and sought the best way to protect everyone and minimize distress. Our patients were truly inspirational across those initial days as they adapted to a new reality and not being with loved ones at such a vulnerable time.

To help our patients and their families, MUH set about working on a number of initiatives, including:

- Introducing an online **Letter System** to help patients keep in contact with their loved ones, during their stay. Pastoral Care, together with the Office of the Director of Nursing, enabled this new system.
- Accepting generous donations of **iPads** which were vital to helping patients face time with family and friends.
- Redesigning the **Reception** area to reassure families that they could safely leave items for their loved ones to be collected.
- Maintaining the dignity of our patients with the incredible generosity of Irwin's Pharmacy and Penney's who donated **Patient Packs**. These incredible goodwill gestures included care packs for both male and female patients.
- Pastoral Care together with our MUH End of Life Committee provided exceptional care for our patients and their families during this most painful time.



Respect



The support of our wider community was phenomenal. So many gestures of goodwill - words, actions and gifts provided a much needed morale boost for our staff. We cannot acknowledge everyone here but a specially designed Mercy Thank You Card will issue from MUH CEO Sandra Daly to everyone who supported us during this period.

MUH Reception staff, Porters and Catering Team were on the ground facilitating the movement of so many donations delivered directly to the hospital.

When the decision was taken to adapt PPE, a call went out for Seamstresses/Tailors to assist us. Once again we were overwhelmed with the tremendous response and were delighted with so many offers. Thank you Aileen Bunce, Angela Murphy, Anne O'Connell, Betty Joyce and Anna Walsh for volunteering your gifts and your time for us.

MUH was also delighted to welcome Lord Mayor John Sheehan who made a courtesy visit to MUH to offer support to all our staff and patients.

Mile Buíochas

On June 24th, Mercy University Hospital joined with our cross city civic partners to acknowledge and bid a symbolic farewell to the LE Eithne as they completed their mission in support of the HSE and health partners during Covid-19. MUH CEO, Sandra Daly addressed the crew and a transcript of her speech is featured below and our Department of Nursing represented their uniformed colleagues in the quayside, multi-agency farewell.

“A chairde uaisle,

Molann bhúr ard ceannaire an t-Uachtarán Ó hÚigín an Ghaeilge a úsáid chomh minic agus is féidir. Gríosaim daoibhse an Ghaeilge a labhairt agus mar sin ba mhaith liom tabhairt faoi mé féin.

Is onóir agus ana phribhléid domsa bheith anseo ar maidin chun ár mbuíochas a ghabháil libh. Ar mo shon féin agus thar cheann fhoireann an oispidéil gabhaim míle buíochas le cabhlach na h-Éireann as an gcabhair a thug said do mhuintir uile Chorcaí i rith an paindéim. Go h-áirithe ba mhaith liom fíor bhuíochas a ghabháil le captaen agus criú na Loinge Eithne. Ag féachaint oraibh anseo inniu tá sé soiléar go bhfuil dlúth bhaint agus cairdeas agaibhse leis an gcathair seo. Tá clú agus cáil tuilte ag an LE Eithne as an gcabhair a thugann said do dhaoine i ngátar. Tá an seirbhís sláinte thar a bheith buíoch d’fir agus do mhná na loinge seo as teacht i gcabhair ar an gcathair seo le déanaí. Ba chúis misnigh do mhuintir na cathrach bhúr long a fheiscint feistithe leis an gcé i lár na cathrach i rith an paindéim.

Tá sibh ag imeacht inniu chun bhúr ndualgaisí tábhachtacha a chomhlíonadh amuigh ar an bhfharraige. Guím aimsir shéimh agus farraigí suaimhneacha libh. Slán agus beannacht dé oraibh go léir.”



Mercy Moments!

A Very Happy New Year!

Mercy University Hospital was thrilled to celebrate a very special Mercy 1st to begin not just the New Year but the new decade!

Congratulations to our colleague Diana Pinto and her family on the birth of their beautiful daughter and sister Aida who was the first Cork baby of the New Year and new decade. Aida was born in Cork University Maternity Hospital.



Nursing Graduation

Congratulations to our Nursing Graduates - MUH hosted a special celebration to honour the MUH Nurse Graduates of 2019. *“Graduation isn’t the end of a tough journey; it’s the beginning of a beautiful one ...”* Let the journey continue!

International Volunteer Day

We were delighted to celebrate International Volunteer Day with our own volunteers “Friends of the Mercy”. It was the perfect opportunity to acknowledge these ambassadors for volunteerism and the Mercy Values.



Leading the Way!

Mr. Derek Hennessey (Consultant Urologist) together with Dr. Gemma Brown (Consultant General Medicine/Renal) and their respective teams facilitated the inaugural Renal Stone Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT) meeting in Mercy University Hospital in late January. Congratulations to everyone involved as this is the first such MDT in the country. MUH is presently leading the way in Europe for kidney stone treatment and such developments will allow MUH to provide a quality service which hopefully will grow and expand to provide the required care for patients.

HSCP National Day

Our last “mass gathering” before Covid-19 restrictions came into place was to celebrate National HSCP Day on March 4th. The theme this year was innovation and integration which is what our HSCP colleagues deliver every day. Congratulations to everyone for a fun and informative day.



Mercy Moments!

Welcoming the class of 2020

We were delighted to welcome the new Interns to MUH on May 20th. This unique group have already earned their place in history as they started six weeks ahead of schedule as part of the Covid-19 response



And the Winners are....

This year's flu vaccine campaign (2019/2020) was a very successful one with 59% of Mercy staff availing of the vaccine. A total of 915 vaccines were administered compared to 840 last year, this includes Mercy staff, students, contractors and volunteers. In late 2019, the annual Flu Vaccine Draw was held in the Glass room. Thank you to Marion Coughlan and Lorraine O'Sullivan who independently observed the draw.

Photographed is the winner of the 1st prize Colette Nyhan (left) with Clodagh O'Leary, Occupational Health Department

Managing People Skills Programme

Congratulations to MUH Managers and Leaders who completed the 4th Managing People Skills Programme. The programme consists of 4 modules and is facilitated by Margaret McCormack, McCormack Consulting



Better Together

Towards the end of 2019 Mercy University Hospital facilitated the first Acute and Community Integrated Care Information sharing day - ACT. This occasion showcased the services and supports available to patients to assist discharge planning and transition to home. It provided an opportunity for staff from 21 services across the acute and community sector to meet with colleagues and present their own service and the logistics in accessing same. It was the first of its kind in the SSWHG.

The day was open to all members of the health services across acute and community and exemplified integrated care networking at its best! Congratulations to organizers and participants.

2020 – Celebrating Nursing

2020 is the year designated by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife.

MUH Director of Nursing, Margaret McKiernan formally launched MUH's Year of the Nurse celebrations on February 14th and acknowledged the incredible contribution of Nurses who work and support people through lifetime continuum – cradle to grave. She declared that this year is an opportunity to lead, innovate and excel across all areas and specialties of nursing and on a personal level a key priority for Margaret as Director of Nursing is to articulate and showcase the Art and Science of nursing here in the Mercy Nursing Community.



Each month for the remainder of the year, the Department of Nursing will showcase a particular aspect of Nursing Care including End of Life Care, Inclusion and Diversity, Interprofessional working etc. These will take the form of ward based education/pop up stands/meetings/poster presentations/study sessions/interactive forums and staff across the hospital can be part of the

This is the first time a specific discipline has been recognised by WHO in this way and this is why:

- Nurses and midwives account for nearly 50% of the global health workforce and play a critical role in health promotion, disease prevention and delivering primary and community care.
- Nurses and midwives are often the first and sometimes the only health professional that people see and the quality of their initial assessment, care and treatment is vital. They are also part of their local community-sharing its culture, strengths and vulnerabilities- and can shape and deliver effective interventions to meet the needs of patients, communities and families.

- The Global Strategic directions for strengthening nursing and midwifery 2016-2020 provides a framework for WHO and key stakeholders to develop, implement and evaluate nursing and midwifery accomplishments to ensure accessible, acceptable, quality and safe nursing and midwifery interventions. It sets out four broad themes to guide the contributions of the nursing and midwifery workforce to improve global health:
 - Ensuring an educated, competent and motivated workforce within effective and responsive health systems at all levels and in different settings
 - Optimizing policy developments, effective leadership, management and governance
 - Maximising the capacities and potential of nurses and midwives through professional collaborative partnerships, education and continuing professional development
 - Mobilizing political will to invest in building effective evidence based nursing and midwifery workforce development
- For all countries to reach Sustainable Development Goal 3 on health and well being, WHO estimates that the world will need an additional 9 million nurses and midwives by the year 2030.
- Investing in nurses and midwives is good value for money. The report of the UN High Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth concluded that investments in education and job creation in the health and social sectors result in a triple return of improved health outcomes, global health security and inclusive economic growth.
- Globally 70% of the health and social care workforce are women compared to 41% in all employment sectors. Nursing and midwifery occupations represent a significant share of the female workforce.



Unfortunately, all events locally and nationally were put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, it could not be more timely that 2020 is the Year of the Nurse and Midwife. *“The pandemic has shown the world that nurses’ knowledge is essential to health care because of their unique relationship with patients, their families and communities. Nurses have earned their place at the table whenever healthcare policy and planning decisions are being made”* (President International Council of Nurses)

Recipe: Florentine Chicken

Lukasz Dabrowski, MUH Head Chef



INGREDIENTS

- 6 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- Chestnuts mushrooms 200gr
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup diced shallots
- 1 pound baby spinach
- 1 cup white wine
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan
- 1 Roma tomato, diced
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley leaves

DIRECTIONS

1. Season chicken with salt and pepper, to taste.
2. Working one at a time, dredge chicken in flour.
3. Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a large skillet over medium high heat. Add chicken and cook, flipping once, until cooked through, about 4-5 minutes on each side. Set aside and keep warm.
4. Melt remaining 4 tablespoons butter in the skillet. Add garlic, shallots, mushrooms and cook, stirring frequently, until fragrant, about 2 minutes.
5. Stir in spinach until it begins to wilt, about 2 minutes.
6. Stir in wine and cook, stirring occasionally, until reduced by half, about 5 minutes.
7. Gradually whisk in heavy cream, sour cream and Parmesan until slightly thickened, about 3-4 minutes; season with salt and pepper, to taste.
8. Serve chicken immediately topped with spinach mixture, garnished with tomato and parsley, if desired.

Happy Retirement

During 2019, Mercy University Hospital bade farewell to eighteen Mercy colleagues and one UCC colleague (our Librarian) who set off on the next stage of their life's adventure....

Paula Bracken - Francis Buckley - Nuala Cotter - Cathy Creedon O'Connor - Rosemary Downey - Anne Fanning - Bernice Glavin - Teresa Kearney - Maire Kelleher - Mary McHugh - Jean Moore O'Sullivan - Sr Gertrude Murphy - Joe Murphy - Eileen O'Brien - Evelyn O'Byrne - Noelle O'Grady - Gertrude O'Sullivan - Noreen O'Sullivan and Anne Quirke

Colleagues and friends gathered to honour their cherished and valued team members for their commitment and dedication to not only their chosen discipline but to Mercy throughout their working lives.

May the best of happiness, honour and fortune keep with you all as you are wished a very Happy Retirement.



Foundation Features

To all staff at the Mercy Hospital,

We would like to say a huge 'Thank You' for the incredible work you have all been doing over the last few months. Your dedication to your work and care of patients, as always, has encouraged so many of our donors, old and new, to give back and support our Covid-19 Appeal which has helped purchase equipment and support you in the work you have been doing during this pandemic.

As we continue to work from home, we are so grateful to be in a position to support you during this time from afar.

Thank you to all of those who have helped us over the last number of weeks in showing our donors and the public the amazing work being carried out at the Mercy University Hospital. We look forward to continuing to work with and support you over the coming months.

The Foundation Team



Here are just some of the ways our Covid-19 Appeal has helped;

- Provided funding for ventilators and a Mobile Digital X-Ray System for ICU
- Refurbished a property on Thomas St for staff to use to make some food, take a break or get some sleep while on call.
- Purchased 3 Biological Safety Cabinets for Microbiology
- Purchased 10 Cardiac Monitors
- Provided coffee stations and cold water towers throughout the hospital

And much more...

Editorial Team

Mercy Times has a wide audience that is continuing to grow across the health, corporate and political sectors and it is a wonderful opportunity to showcase all that is good and positive about MUH.

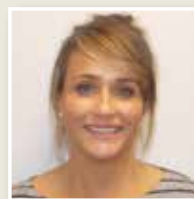
Join the Team ... if you have an article, photo, snippet, event ... let us know We are here for you!

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Emily Burns (MUH Foundation), Majella Cahill, Lukasz Dabrowski, Grainne Kennedy, Margaret McKiernan, Jane O'Brien, James O'Connor and every member of staff who contributed photos to our Covid-19 story.