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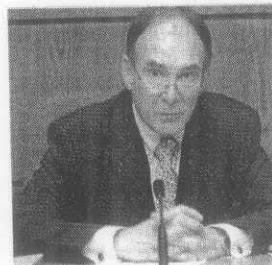
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DUBLIN REGIONAL LEADER

Mike Dwane

THE doctor spearheading the reorganisation of emergency medicine and acute hospital services in the Mid-West says it "simply isn't true" that the HSE is not resourcing Limerick Regional Hospital to cope with extra patients from Clare and Tipperary.

Under the HSE plan, the emergency departments in Ennis and Nenagh will close at night from April 1 with all patients being brought to a regional centre of excellence in Limerick.



Paul Burke: resources committed to Regional

ick. All acute surgery from the two local hospitals, and St John's, will migrate to Limerick from the beginning of July.

Fine Gael and Labour have joined local hospital campaigners and a group of 80 GPs from the Mid-West in warning the changes will "overwhelm" the emergency department in Dooradoyle and that the HSE was ignoring a key recommendation in the Teamwork Report that no services be transferred until Limerick Regional Hospital received major capital investment.

But Paul Burke, consultant vascular surgeon and director of the reform project, told the Limerick

Leader that the HSE is committing the resources to cope with the changes in the coming weeks and months.

"What we are trying to change at the moment is acute surgery, which is being centralised. Also within the next two years, we want to centralise critical care - which is intensive care and coronary care area.

The capital injection for each of those steps is to be in place before those services are changed. For acute surgery to come in

here in July, for example, we have to build an emergency theatre. Now we have the shell of the ninth theatre in the theatre block, which was never commissioned. That is now being commissioned. It had been used as a storage area for a number of years. A new storage area is now being built and we expect that new theatre to be ready in the third quarter of 2009, some time between July or August. But because it's the summer months, there will be less

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IGB denies new stadium being put on hold

Gerard Fitzgibbon

THE Irish Greyhound Board (IGB) has dismissed speculation that work on its €18 million stadium at Greenpark is to be put on hold due to the economic downturn.

It was rumoured this week that construction at the Dock Road site is to be postponed only a matter of days after works began. The IGB has previously stated that the new development will be funded by the sale of the Market's Field stadium and its offices on Henry Street.

However, while no buyers have yet been found for either premises,

the IGB is insistent that work on the new facility is proceeding on schedule: "We're not sure where these rumours are coming from, but everything is on track and proceeding as planned," a spokesperson told the Limerick Leader.

Construction of the new stadium is expected to create 100 jobs, with a further 200 jobs created once the stadium is opened in 2010.

The IGB this week reported that overall attendance figures, betting and sponsorship were down in 2008 compared to 2007, but still reported an annual capital surplus

of €5.1 million. Last December, in response to a nine per cent drop in the horse and greyhound racing fund for 2009, the IGB announced a €2 million package of cost savings and rationalisation.

Salaries above €50,000 have been frozen for 2009, while chief executive Adrian Neilan and a number of senior managers have taken a voluntary five per cent pay cut.

"We have acted quickly and with confidence to address the overall slowdown in economic activity and how it affects our sport," said Mr Neilan. "We

remain positive that the fundamentals of the sport are strong."

In 2008 year-on-year attendances fell from 1,281,684 to 1,123,133, while total betting decreased from €139.5 million to €120.6 million.

Chairman of the IGB Dick O'Sullivan said the rationalisation plan would ensure that the same level of prize money and grants would be paid to greyhound owners and trainers. He criticised the Government for reducing funding to this "traditional, indigenous industry".

WEEKEND WEATHER



FRIDAY Cloudy, 6-9C
SATURDAY Cloudy, mild 7-11C
SUNDAY Cloudy, mild 6-10C

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