



IRISH MEDICAL
ORGANISATION
Ceardchumann Dochtúirí na hÉireann

IMO

Strategic Plan
2008 - 2010

INTRODUCTION

In 2005, to mark the 21st anniversary of your Irish Medical Organisation, we launched our three-year Strategic Plan. One of the key points we made at that time was to stress that industrial relations remained the core activity of the IMO and the purpose of the Plan was to re-inforce that principle but also to build on our other roles, particularly in the area of policy development.

At the time, I stated that it was imperative that the Plan be rooted in realism and that we should not fall into the trap of divising a grand plan without taking heed of its implementation.

The IMO is a strong visionary body and, over the last number of years, we have successfully linked strategy to achievable goals through our day-to-day operations.



“Strategy without tactics is the long road to victory;
tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.”

SunTzu, *The Art of War*.

In this context, I am happy to report that we achieved the majority of the goals we set ourselves in 2005 and where elements remain unfinished much progress has been made.

In launching the Strategic Plan in 2005, I said that we intended it to be a dynamic rolling programme which would extend from year-to-year with individual action plans designed to meet our goals.

This new Strategic Plan adopts some of the elements of the previous one and challenges the Organisation to stretch our targets.

However, even a well-formulated and well-executed strategy must be flexible enough to adapt to external circumstances. It was clear in the formulation of this new Strategic Plan that we were facing different economic and political circumstances. The one constant is that the role of the IMO as a trade union is imperative both to the development of health policy in Ireland and to the protection of the role of the doctor in our society.



In devising this second phase of our continuing Strategic Plan, we determined to adhere to the **Mission Statement** of the IMO.



The role of the IMO is to **represent** doctors in Ireland and to **provide** them with all relevant services. It is committed to the **development** of a caring, **efficient** and effective Health Service.

I must record my gratitude to the current and past Presidents, other office holders, Council members, Specialty Committee members and our loyal members throughout the country for their contributions and support.

In the process, their views were brought to the working group which I convened to further develop our goals and objectives in the key areas of:

- Excellence in Industrial Relations
- Professional Representation and Strategic Alliances
- Engaging Membership

Much of the impetus for the development of this phase of the IMO's strategy came from our groundbreaking research carried out for the paper on ***The Role of the Doctor*** which we published in 2007.

The information gathered was particularly valuable because so many doctors participated in the consultation process.

I emphasise that the Strategic Plan does not signal a change in direction for the IMO. However, you will note that some new elements of the Plan include:


- a review of the representative structure of the IMO to ensure that it best meets the needs of members
- the development of an advisory / mediation service for doctors as employers
- the introduction of non-clinical training services
- member campaigns
- ongoing consultation with members through focus groups and surveys

In 2009, we will be celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Irish Medical Organisation. I am very much looking forward to the publication of our 25th anniversary book on the story and achievements of your organisation and the people who have given so much for their colleagues, for their profession and for their patients.

George McNeice
Chief Executive



The members of the working group are:

	Dr Martin Daly	President, IMO
—	Dr Paula Gilvarry	Past President, IMO
—	Dr Joe Barry	Past President, IMO
—	Mr Sean Tierney	IMO Management Committee
—	George McNeice	Chief Executive, IMO
—	Ms Susan Clyne	Director of Finance and Administration, IMO
—	Mr Michael Dennehy	Dennehy Associates
—	Mr Niall Saul	McNamara Construction



EXCELLENCE IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Work was undertaken on the key objectives from the 2005 – 2007 Strategic Plan. To ensure continuity, there are a number of basic principles which will continue in this Strategic Plan. They include:

- Maintain and enhance the IMO's position as the key medical representative body
- Create a climate and practice of timely responses to members' needs, individually and collectively
- Create and maintain a greater focus on customer service to members
- Ensure better outcomes for members

Industrial relations is – and will remain – the core activity of the IMO. Through its predecessors, the Irish Medical Association and the Medical Union, the Organisation has had a long history of achievements in this key area. It has met the challenges that have been brought about through the ever-increasing complexity of legislation concerning industrial relations and other issues. Doctors practising in Ireland do so under a myriad of regulatory and statutory rules.

In the context of seeking to further develop and enhance our activities in this key area for our members, this Strategic Plan will focus on the following objectives:

1 Conduct a comprehensive review to ensure the structures of the IMO, through its committees and representatives, best meet the negotiating needs of members

- Student representation
- Specialty Committees
- Issues regarding sub-groups in each specialty
- Issues surrounding Hospital Res Committees and local branch structures

2 Develop a range of career paths/models

- The IMO will develop career path options for each of the specialty groups. The initial phase will be for the general practitioner group and will involve the commissioning of a comprehensive survey of all GPs to ascertain options, preferences and expectations. Based on this information, the IMO will prepare models for career paths which will then inform contract negotiations.
- Special recognition to be given to – and programmes directed at – the evolving gender balance within the profession. Particular attention to be paid to systems – and referencing in other countries – which cater to the discrete career needs of female medical practitioners.

3 The establishment and development of a Contract Review Service

In recognition of the complexity of any proposed contracts – or new contracts in the future – the IMO will offer a service, personal to the member, to review and advise accordingly on his or her employment contract.

4 In terms of contract negotiations, seek an impact assessment to consider family friendly policies and the balance between clinical and administrative workload among other issues

- The IMO will seek to constructively engage with employers on these matters to ensure that doctors contracted time is best used for patient care and optimum service delivery.
- The IMO will seek to ensure that employers recognise the reality of the changing demographics of medical graduates and to ensure contracts are designed to be flexible so as to guarantee an adequate cohort of clinical leaders into the future.

5 The introduction of an advisory/mediation service for doctors as employers

- In its initial phase, the IMO will run a number of seminars to enhance awareness of the issues
- The IMO will implement a programme to seek suitable partners to facilitate this service

6 The IMO will engage positively with the Health Forum as long as it, and any future fora, are deemed to be seriously committed to resolving issues in a spirit of partnership and trust

- As the only body representing all branches of the medical profession, the IMO has the responsibility and duty to inform, promote and lobby the views of the medical profession.



PROFESSIONAL REPRESENTATION AND STRATEGIC ALLIANCES

Our ongoing strategy is to improve the IMO's profile and, hence, credibility both with stakeholders and the broader audience. We will seek, over the course of this plan, to maximise our potential as the professional representative body for the medical profession and continue to build strategic alliances in the development of policy.

As a professional representative body, a key activity for the Organisation is its advocacy role. Individually, doctors have long advocated on behalf of their patients and we have a duty as their representative body to harness all the available mechanisms to bring maximum influence to bear.

Advocacy can be a slow process but its effects are cumulative and, in the medium to long term, successful.

It is the responsibility of everyone in the health service to ensure that the needs of patients are the primary consideration. Doctors are best qualified to determine patient needs and they are best positioned to champion the interests of their patients. Professionally, doctors are obliged to ensure that the quality, amount and timing of the care for their patients are met so that the best possible outcome is achieved.

Advocacy for patients ranges from the particular to the general. Doctors are responsible for ensuring the best possible care for individual patients but they are also obliged to advocate for a system that aspires to deliver the best possible care to all patients.

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Irish Medical Organisation in 2009 – while cognisant of the genesis of the Organisation from the 19th century – it is our intention to publish a 25th anniversary book on the story and achievements of the Organisation and the people who have given so much for their colleagues, their profession and their patients.

In the context of this Strategic Plan, we will build on the policies that we have developed and implemented in recent years in the areas of:

Education issues

Societal issues

Health service issues.

The key objectives are:

1 Supporting and promoting the Role of the Doctor.

In 2006, IMO Council, seeking to continue the campaign to support and promote the role of the doctor, decided to undertake a major project to determine and best describe the role of the doctor in Ireland today.

As well as numerous discussions within the organisation and among doctors throughout the country, we reviewed international literature and models.

To ensure the greatest possible level of consultation, the IMO invited responses to a comprehensive questionnaire which determined factors and unique aspects of being a doctor in addition to the various roles that they undertake in their daily working lives.

Over the lifetime of this Strategic Plan, we will take three key principles from the Role of the Doctor Policy Paper and develop policy/position statements on each of them. Subjects include:

- Doctor/Patient Confidentiality
- Every Patient Has the Right to be Treated by a Doctor
- The Doctor as Advocate
- The Doctor as Leader, Manager, Owner

In the development of these papers, the involvement and the inclusion of the entire membership would be vital, as proved so successfully in the creation of The Role of the Doctor paper. All papers to be compiled using the same methodology such as questionnaires; these can be via email.

In supporting the role of the doctor and to take account of the array of circumstances in which doctors practise, the IMO will champion the doctor as leader, the doctor as manager and the doctor as owner.

2 The development of non-clinical educational training services

As an enhancement to our representative role, we will actively develop and deliver a number of key training courses for our members through the IMO Communications Training Centre.

In the context of developing these courses, the IMO will seek to have the courses accredited through FETAC and by the colleges for CME/CPD activity. Additionally, the IMO will explore opportunities to collaborate with the colleges:

To develop a separate training plan for the IMO Communications Training Centre to create and deliver training courses over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan as follows:

- The management of change
- Influencing skills
- Effective team management

To foster and promote, in association with the colleges, courses and personal development programmes to enhance the skills and attributes of those doctors who, through new contracts and new programmes of work, will assume additional clinical leadership responsibilities.



3 Strategic Alliances – Development of IMO Policy

Continue to develop our policy in the three broad areas of:

- education
- societal issues
- health services

Through this development and promotion, seek strategic alliances with suitable organisations. There will be a number of key policy initiatives under each of the headings for each year of the Plan allowing for flexibility to respond to issues as they arise from the AGM. In developing policy, the IMO will be more cogniscent of upcoming legislation so that we can better influence and lobby decisions still to be taken.

Considering the imperative to operate on an all-island basis, we will develop strategic alliances in association with the BMA in Northern Ireland, over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan, through joint initiatives.

ENGAGING MEMBERSHIP

In recognition of the ever-increasing workload of our members and conscious of our desire to enhance and improve our service to members, the key objectives of this Strategic Plan will be to communicate in an efficient and effective manner with our members and to facilitate those members engaging in and with the IMO.

Our key objectives include:

1 Internet Communication Strategy

- Individual Home Pages for each specialty group within main site
- More online resource material for members e.g. relocation issues
- Questionnaires/Opinion Surveys
- Discussion Forums
- Profiles of committee members
- Enhanced Frequently Asked Questions / Information content
- Facilitate online communications and discussion for Committees

2 Member campaigns

- The IMO campaign in 2007 on HSE cutbacks was very successful. It is our intention to replicate this model both in terms of supporting policy and responding to unforeseen issues within the Health Service.

3 Enhance and target communication in key areas

Student population

- Annual IMO student debate – In conjunction with colleges with objective to award medal
- Student representation
- Educate students about principles of doctors acting collectively in the interests of patients

Facilitate members who wish to become involved for a short period of time on a specific project – develop a database of interested members

4 IMO meetings

- Review structure of annual general meeting
- Enhance CME/CPD element of regional meetings
- An annual one-day meeting on a non-industrial relations based issue – e.g.
 - i. Impact of gender issues for the future of medicine
 - ii. The role of the doctor in society



5 Research Prize/Best Original Competition through IMJ

In association with IPHA/Pharmaceutical Industry

6 Through focus groups/surveys continuously assess members needs

NOTES



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MISSION STATEMENT

The role of the IMO is to **represent** doctors in Ireland and to **provide** them with all relevant services.

It is committed to the **development** of a caring, **efficient** and effective Health Service.

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