

**7.21 A Novel Self-referral Pathway for Exacerbating COPD Patients to Prevent Attendance at the Emergency Department (ED) – A Pilot Study with COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) Outreach in Tallaght University Hospital (TUH) in Conjunction with the National Ambulance Service (NAS)**

Ciara Scallan<sup>1</sup>, Elaine Joyce<sup>1</sup>, Judith Maxwell<sup>1</sup>, Prof Eddie Moloney<sup>2</sup>, Dr Minesh Kooblall<sup>2</sup>, Dr Rosie Kelly<sup>2</sup>, Bridget Clarke<sup>3</sup>, Ann Mc Dermott<sup>3</sup>, Mark Foley<sup>3</sup>, Catriona Kinch<sup>3</sup>, Sean Brady<sup>3</sup>, Paul Gallen<sup>3</sup>, Martin O' Reilly<sup>4</sup>, John Guilfoyle<sup>4</sup>, Brendan Mc Nicholas<sup>4</sup>, Kristin Mc Kenzie Vaas<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> COPD Outreach, Tallaght University Hospital, <sup>2</sup> Tallaght University Hospital, <sup>3</sup> National Ambulance Service, <sup>4</sup> Dublin Fire Brigade, <sup>5</sup> Grant Thornton

COPD Outreach in TUH and the NAS started a novel symbiotic self-referral service in June 2022 to help prevent exacerbating COPD patients presenting to ED. If they become symptomatic, patients contact COPD Outreach during office hours, or the NAS out of hours, and if suitable, they are seen and treated at home. To date, 14 patients have contacted the service. Nine (65%) were suitable for COPD Outreach and visited at home. One patient (7%) was seen by the NAS. The other 4 patients (28%) were referred to their General Practitioner (GP) for non-COPD related symptoms. The 9 suitable patients were advised to commence the rescue prescription previously given. This prevented them having to attend their GP or ED. On their last presentation to ED, these 10 patients waited on average of 15.5 hours (range from 3.5 to 30 hours) to be seen. This new pathway allowed these patients to be treated in the comfort of their own home. This service is only in its infancy but already 10 patients have been treated at home and avoided presenting to ED. This project will continue over the next year with the hope that further ED attendances for COPD patients can be prevented.