



# NURSING 400

CELEBRATING 400 YEARS  
OF NURSING CARE



# FOREWORD

*Celebrating a combined 400 years of nursing care is a significant achievement which puts AMNCH in a a very unique position.*

*In organising this event the concentration on our combined histories has shown that this organisation has evolved from a great tradition of caring and excellence. This generation and all future generations of nurses who will work here have a duty of care to uphold those traditions and values and continue to keep the patient at the centre of all we strive to achieve in our professional duties.*

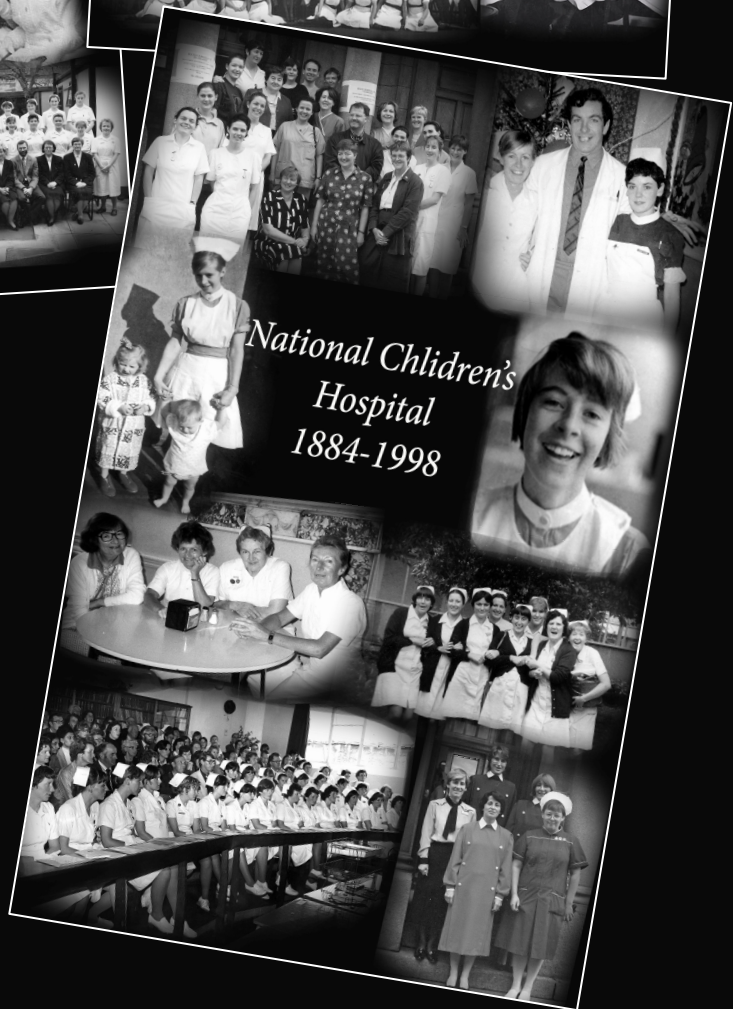
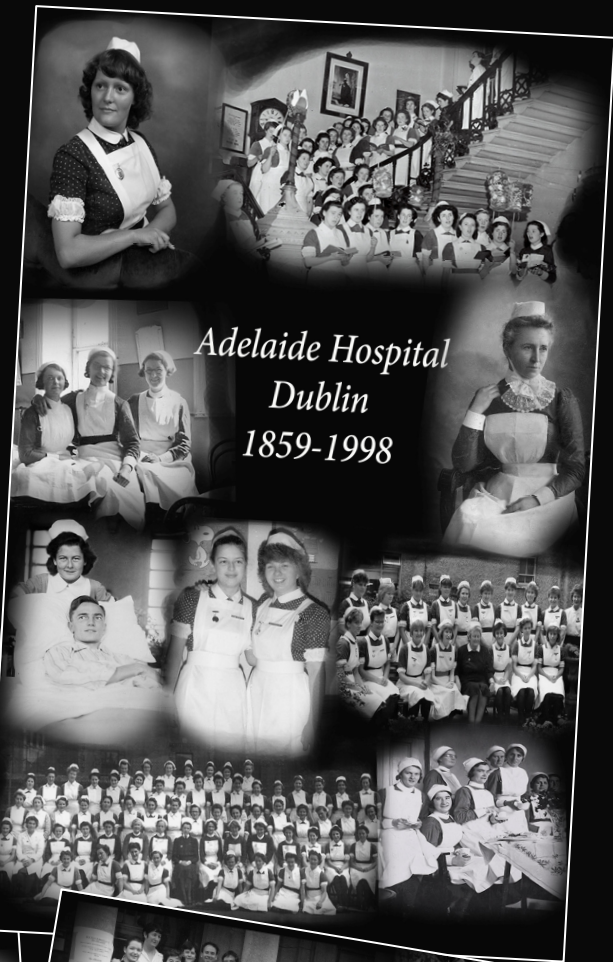
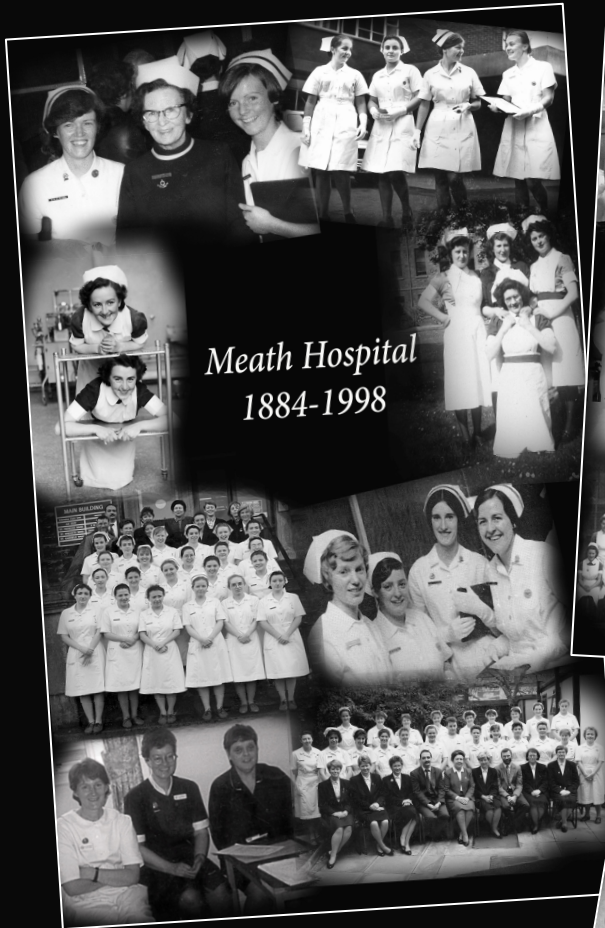
*My sincere and heartfelt thanks to all who assisted with this celebration.*

*Ann Donovan*

**Director of Nursing, AMNCH.**



# The Past



**Adelaide & Meath Hospital, incorporating the  
National Children's Hospital (AMNCH)  
Ospidéal Adelaide agus na Mí, Baile Átha Cliath,  
ina gcorpraítear Ospidéal Náisiúnta na Leanaí**

**Celebrating 400 years of Nursing Services**

It is considered that the nursing service and in turn the delivery of nursing care within the three hospitals commenced with the concept that nurses who care for patients need to be appropriately trained and with the inception of training for nurses. Therefore although the Adelaide hospital was opened in 1839, the Meath in 1753 and the National Children's Hospital in 1821 their nursing services were considered to have commenced in; Adelaide hospital in 1859, Meath Hospital in 1884, National Children's Hospital in 1884.

**Adelaide Hospital Nursing Service 1859**

The Adelaide Hospital opened in 1839 but nurses, at that time, would have

*“bore no resemblance to the nurses of to-day. Unkempt and illiterate, they were distinguished from the wardmaids only by the fact that they cleaned and cared for the patient rather than for the furniture and the floors, and were slightly better paid.”<sup>1</sup>*

To counter this, in 1859, the Matron Miss Bramwell established a School of Nursing. A Training Department for Nurses was established by Mrs Sarah Ruttle (Matron) in 1861. Mrs Ruttle attended the Kaserwerth School of Nursing and on her return she introduced regulations for training. It provided the first nurse education available for lay women. The venture was deemed a success by 1870.

As a result by 1879, as improvements were sought, changes occurred to emphasise the need for trained and certified nurses from the Lady Superintendent downwards along with the need for nurses not to act as ward maids and cooks. In 1888 specific changes to nurse training occurred requiring a three year training programme with exams at the end of year one and three and that the probationers rotate through all divisions of the hospital during their training.

Adelaide nurses were known worldwide by their distinct uniform of a navy dress with white spots which was introduced in 1859 by Miss Bramwell as it was a “*copy of those worn by the sisters at St Thomas’s Hospital London where Miss Bramwell had trained.*”<sup>1</sup> The Adelaide Hospital “*badge for nurses was first awarded in 1902*”<sup>2</sup>

A distinctive feature of the Adelaide nursing service was that from 1887 until 1939 they provided “*out nurses to homes*”<sup>1</sup> who nursed individual patients privately in their own homes.

Nurses as far back as the 1920’s have shared their experiences of training and working in the Adelaide Hospital. A nurse who trained in 1920’s remembered being handed a basket with cleaning materials for baths and how Sister Morton showed her what to do. She recalled that “*Cleaning baths was a great cure for homesickness,*”<sup>1</sup> Another nurse remembered that “*tepid sponging*”<sup>1</sup> helped alleviate a fever, and the use of linseed poultices and leeches.

A nurse in the 1930’s recalled that “*The Adelaide was a very big influence in my life and I still think it was a super training*”<sup>1</sup> and another on returning to set up the Varicose Ulcer clinic where she was known as the “*White Swan*”<sup>1</sup> stayed for 20 years.

Another notable achievement in the 1920's and 1930's was that Adelaide student nurses won the Gold and/or Silver Medals from the "*Dublin Metropolitan School*,"<sup>3</sup> in 1925, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1936, 1937 and 1938.

A nurse from the 1940s described her impressions of nursing sisters of that time such as the Tutor Sister Joynt who had a "*great sense of humour*"<sup>1</sup>, Sister Crawford who was "*a wonderfully caring Sister, as big in heart as in stature.*"<sup>1</sup> and Sister Acton who was strict but would then take you aside and say

*"You're all right now, I think I've knocked all the nonsense you learned on the other landings out of your head."*<sup>1</sup>

Nurses from the 1950's recalled that "*Learning Invalid Cookery in the Diet Kitchen with Sister Perry was great fun*"<sup>1</sup> but as they were constantly hungry every time her back was turned "*nourishing dishes:- Baked Custard...*"<sup>1</sup> were known to disappear.

Nurse reminiscing from the 1960's describe the "*unique family atmosphere in the Adelaide*"<sup>1</sup>, that it was considered that an Adelaide nurse "*can turn her hand to anything*"<sup>1</sup> and

*"First days on the wards – damp dusting, bedpan rounds and feet that ached. First injections, first cardiac arrests, first corpses, first drunks in Casualty."*<sup>1</sup>

In the 1970's a nurse remembered that there were many "*funny, difficult and sad times during our years in the Adelaide, but all these shared experiences, the excellent teaching we received and our everyday work together, established a strong team spirit, and made for many lifelong friendships.*"<sup>1</sup>

## Meath Hospital Nursing Service 1884

The Meath Hospital (formally the Meath & County Dublin Infirmary) opened in 1753 with only two nurses employed, which then increased to seven by 1873. Conditions were harsh and nurse's were "*often illiterate, did not receive any special training and were little more than domestic workers.*"<sup>4</sup>

By 1879 dissatisfaction was been expressed about the nursing in the hospital as nurses were still largely untrained. As a result, as improvements were sought, in 1884, this changed both with the appointment of Miss Ellinor Lyons as the Lady Superintendent, who was now responsible for the training and supervision of nurses, and with the employment of trained nurses from the nurses home in Charlemont Mall and the Red Cross Nursing home. The Meath hospital was also involved in the establishment of the Dublin Red Cross Training School along with the National Children's Hospital in 1884.

By 1900, Miss Lyons had a trained nursing staff of "*five sisters, one night nurse, one surgical nurse, six two-year nurse and twelve probationers.*"<sup>4</sup> In 1904 nurse training commenced within the hospital and in 1923 a tutor sister was appointed to augment the teaching received in the training school. After 23 years of service Miss Lyons resigned in 1907 due to ill health. The Meath Hospital badge was first presented in 1906.

Stories about nursing and nurses within the Meath Hospital have been found as far back as the 1920's. It was said of Lucy Dimond, who was appointed as a sister in 1920, that her

*"nursing skill was responsible for saving the lives of many patients suffering from lobar pneumonia before the introduction of antibiotics."*<sup>4</sup>

In the 1930s Sister Winfred Gage was appointed as Matron and she was described as a “*tall striking figure and wore a cream-coloured veil and a brown dress.*”<sup>4</sup>

Sister Eileen Sheridan, X-Ray department sister in the 1940's, was considered to have given “*excellent service up to her retirement.*”<sup>4</sup> During World War 2 Ellen T. Hourigan, who was a Meath Hospital Nurse, was awarded the MBE for her Service with the British Armed forces.

In the 1950's Elizabeth Cunnigham “*was the first nurse to be specially trained in urological nursing*”<sup>4</sup> and she became sister of newly opened GU department and was instrumental in implementing “*the high standards*”<sup>4</sup> which helped make the unit famous. Evelyn Doherty was a popular sister who went on to be Assistant Matron and her sister, also a ward sister, was affectionately known as “*snowy.*”<sup>4</sup> The Hoey sisters commenced training in 1953 and both returned to take up key positions in the hospital. Angela became Principle Nurse Tutor in 1968 and Elizabeth became Assistant Matron in 1969, giving forty years of service to the Meath. This set a precedence for the McCarthy sisters where Mary became Director of Nursing and Margaret became Principle Tutor.

In 1968 Miss Elizabeth O'Dwyer was appointed as Matron. She was known to be very energetic and “*considerate of the nurses' working conditions*”<sup>4</sup> She also “*introduced the Idea of a degree for nursing,*”<sup>4</sup> which is a reality today. Nora Lyons was a ward sister who was known for her “*diagnostic flair*”<sup>4</sup> and was “*feared yet respected*”<sup>4</sup> by her nurses.

Roslyn “*Pinky*”<sup>4</sup> Casey retired in the 1970's after been with the hospital since the 1950's where she was involved in “*allergy work*”<sup>4</sup>.



Mena Lambert was known as “*quiet, unassuming and very competent.*”<sup>4</sup> retired in the 1980’s after thirty years of service. She was also known for her “*remarkable service*”<sup>4</sup> during World War 2.

By the 1980’s the hospitals School of Nursing had a reputation for efficiency and standards. They also linked their training to the Institute of Technology, Kevin Street.

A number of nursing awards were awarded for excellence:

- Georgina Wade medal was “*awarded for both clinical and theoretical ability*”<sup>4</sup>
- Lucy Dimond award was awarded to “*the student nurse who shows the most initiative and promise*”<sup>4</sup>
- Nora Lyons award was awarded “*to the registered nurse who makes the best contribution to the work of the hospital*”<sup>4</sup>

## **National Children’s Hospital Nursing Service 1884**

In 1821 the first teaching children’s hospital in Ireland and Great Britain was founded as the “*Pitt Street Institution*”<sup>5</sup> or the “*Institute for Disease of Children.*”<sup>5</sup> It was the first hospital in Ireland and Britain established specifically for the care and treatment of children and they “*sought to improve child and family centred care.*”<sup>6</sup> Indeed Dr Charles West, who worked in the hospital, went on to found Great Ormond Hospital for Sick Children in Britain in 1852. In 1875 the National Orthopaedic and Children’s Hospital was established and it was formally joined with the Pitt Street Institution in 1884. They both moved to “*Harcourt Street*”<sup>6</sup> in 1887. The stated objectives, when the hospital was established, included

“*to educate mothers and nurses regarding the proper management of children in both health and disease.*”<sup>5,6</sup>

As already shown in the Adelaide and Meath Hospitals conditions at this time were harsh and nurses were “*often illiterate, did not receive any special training and were little more than domestic workers.*”<sup>4</sup>

From its earliest days, the National Children’s Hospital placed strong emphasis on the concept that trained nurses are needed to deliver nursing care. As a result, in 1884, the National Children’s Hospital in conjunction with the Meath Hospital and County Dublin Infirmary established the Dublin Red Cross Training School for Nurses which was “*the first in Ireland.*”<sup>5</sup> They provided a three year programme with exams at the end of year one and three.

During the 1916 rebellion several victims were treated in the NCH and indeed Miss Matthews, Matron, received the “*Order of British Empire for her work in treating the wounded,*”<sup>6</sup> She resigned in 1921 “*to marry the widowed Sir Lambert Ormsby.*”<sup>6</sup>

In 1922 Sick Children’s Nurses registered with the General Council of Ireland in a “*supplementary section*”<sup>7</sup> of the General Nurse Register. With the establishment of An Bord Altranais the “*sick children’s nurse division*”<sup>8</sup> was added to the register of nurses in 1956 with a syllabus for nurse training. This recognised not only the unique requirement for specially trained nurses to care for sick children and “*the importance of specialist pre-registration education*”<sup>9</sup> for nurses caring for sick children but also the work of the nurses who worked and trained in the National Children’s hospital.

Throughout the 1930’s nurses in the National Children’s Hospital, with their colleagues, dealt with diseases such as “*tuberculosis, epidemics of gastroenteritis, rheumatic fever, and celiac disease.*”<sup>6</sup> In addition by the 1960’s, through the work of Dr Keith Shaw, nurses became familiar with the care of children from cardiac conditions such as PDA, Coarctation of the Aorta and By-Pass surgery.

The National Children's Hospital, in 1965, established "*the first Irish pediatric hematology service.*"<sup>6</sup> Their nursing service, due to their involvement, became widely known for their knowledge and proficiency in the care of children with haematological disorders. Indeed the first Bone Marrow Transplant in Ireland was performed by Professor Ian Temperley in the National Children's Hospital in 1978.

As far back as the 1960's "*visiting restrictions were relaxed*"<sup>10</sup> and "*open visiting*"<sup>10</sup> was introduced at the National Children's Hospital. In the 1970's Dr Mervyn Taylor, alongside his nursing colleagues,

*"pioneered the introduction of parent accommodation within the hospital so that parents could stay in hospital with their children."*<sup>11</sup>

It was accepted that "*Parents are not visitors*"<sup>12</sup>. It is hard to believe now but in 1972 only nine mothers stayed with their children that year. Indeed research carried out with the National Children's Hospital in the 1980's identified that with this practice children could be discharged earlier as parents who "*live in*"<sup>11</sup> feel more confident in the care of their sick child. Additionally in the late 1960's and early 1970's volunteers used to visit children in hospital, especially those from the country who had no visitors. Thus the National Children's hospital became widely known for their "*concept of family-centred care.*"<sup>12</sup> By 1985 funding was provided by the Department of Health for a purpose built Mother and Child unit which was opened by the late President Patrick Hilary, who had undertaken his medical training in the National Children's Hospital.

Other developments of the National Children's Hospital nursing service in the 1980's included the establishment of their first nurse specialist in 1986 which was in their Diabetes services.

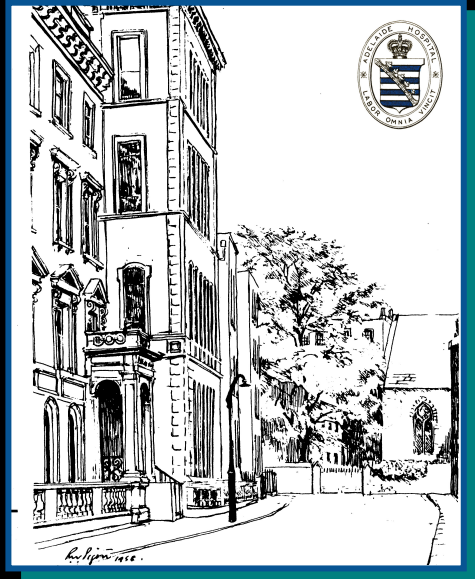
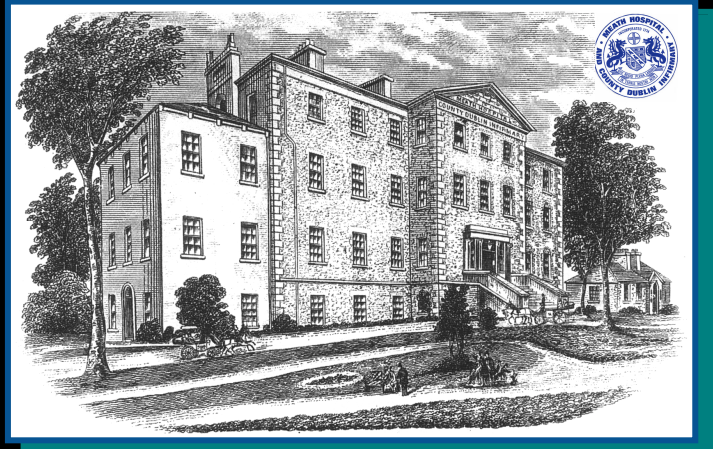
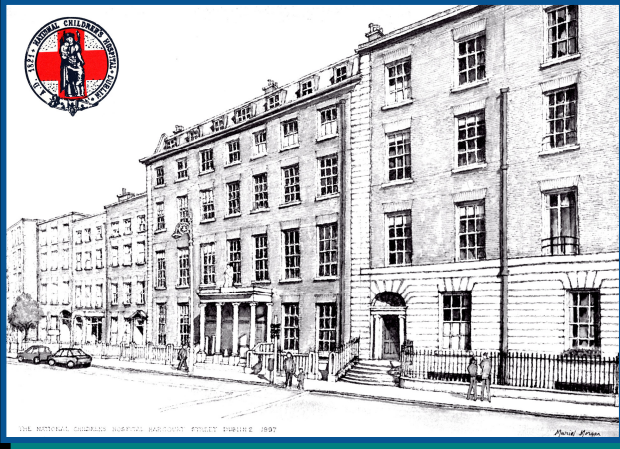
Nursing in the National Children's Hospital also recognised that not only visiting played an important part in the care of sick children but that additional elements such as play are an integral part in the delivery of care to sick children. Thus Ms Chipperfield came around with her trolley of books and toys every day and by 1971 a specific "*play room was established in the hospital.*"<sup>5</sup> Additionally a school for the children was opened in the hospital in 1966 with Mrs O'Riordan as the principal teacher going from bed to bed to teach the children. Eight years later a classroom was opened.

All in all the National Children's Hospital and its nursing service throughout its history became widely known for its values of "*child-centred, family-centred, community centred care*"<sup>13</sup>.

## Connections

In reviewing the histories of the three hospitals it can be seen that the connections go as far back as the 1800's whereby the Meath hospital and the National Children's hospital were both involved in the establishment of the Dublin Red Cross Training School for Nursing in 1884. These connections can be found throughout their history even before the plans to merge the hospitals began in the 1980's. A recent example was that in 1972 two student nurses, Heather Persse from the Adelaide and Margaret McCarthy from the Meath, "*qualified in an open competition to represent Irish Student Nurses at the International Meeting of Student Nursing in Zurich.*"<sup>14</sup>





# “From There to Here”



## **“From There to Here” The Move to the AMNCH**

During the 1980's a rationalisation of the Irish health service led to a reduction of funding for voluntary hospitals which in turn resulted in closure of a number of hospitals and an amalgamation of their services. In line with this, it was planned to build a new hospital in Tallaght, Dublin, which would amalgamate the services of the Adelaide and Meath Hospitals and incorporate the paediatric services of the National Children's hospital and the acute psychiatric services of St Loman's hospital. Planning for the new hospital began as far back as 1981 with the establishment of the Tallaght Hospital Board and building began in 1993. With a view to the move to the new hospital there was increasing co-operation between the nursing services and Schools of Nursing throughout the 1990's. This included the integration of nursing staff prior to the move whereby nurses moved and worked in similar clinical areas within the hospitals due to be amalgamated.

Prior to the hospitals moving to their new building there was detailed planning and logistics which included the packing and moving of furniture, equipment and files. At last on Sunday June 21<sup>st</sup> 1998 the move became a reality. Not only did 115 patients transfer successfully from the Adelaide, Meath and The National Children's Hospital in Dublin's city centre but the hospital accepted its first new admitted patients on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June and from then on activity steadily built.

It must be remembered that the move to Tallaght was a carefully planned and extremely smooth running operation thanks, in a large part, to the huge effort from staff, including nursing and volunteers. All of their hard work paid off and it continues to the present day.

The hospital developed its mission on the principle that it is patient focused and as such provides; a service that meets the healthcare needs of the community, care based on best practice, care that will enhance our patients' wellbeing through education and information, education to healthcare students in partnership with third level institutes, support to our staff in life-long learning, the opportunity to undertake and support research for improved patient and public care, and the development of voluntary participation and support.

In addition the hospital developed a number of stated values:

- ✓ Respect for patient autonomy.
- ✓ Respect for each other.
- ✓ Caring.
- ✓ Openness.
- ✓ Partnership and Teamwork.
- ✓ Fairness and Equity.

In line with this the philosophy of the nursing service which was developed is to meet the individual healthcare needs of patients and to deliver the highest quality of patient care in order to improve both clinical outcomes and the quality of life.

Before the move the three hospitals nursing services had developed a number of nurse specialist roles for both adult and child services such as asthma, cystic fibrosis, dermatology, diabetes, orthopaedics, urology etc. These roles were transferred and built on and continue to develop to this day.

# Last Days

## Adelaide, Meath and NCH Harcourt Street







*1998- Present Day*



## AMNCH Nursing Service 1998 – Present Day

Since moving to the AMNCH in 1998 the Nursing Service provided at the AMNCH aims to create, maintain and continuously develop a centre of excellence for Nursing in the hospital. We promote, protect and improve health by providing a caring and holistic approach based on knowledge and skills in partnership with patients and their families and other healthcare professionals. We provide an integrated structure which is conducive to the provision of high quality nursing care as well as the opportunity for the professional growth and development of each individual Nurse. This is achieved through the effective use of resources and equity access to, and participation in, education and research programmes.

The further education and professional development of our nursing staff is very important to the AMNCH nursing service and is encouraged and supported. We are a teaching hospital linked to Trinity College Dublin (TCD) providing a clinical learning environment for nurses and have developed links with the Institute of Technology Tallaght. We have a Centre of Education. Programmes include pre registration degree courses, post graduate courses, including nurse specialist practice e.g. Accident and Emergency Nursing, Critical Care Nursing, Renal Nursing, Perioperative Nursing, Oncology, Haematology and Orthopaedic Nursing. Other educational and professional development activities include CPR, fire training, minimal lifting, intravenous drugs administration, return to nursing, computer skills, library skills, competency/preceptorship, various conference and study days, policy/guideline/leaflet development, meeting facilitation skills, six sigma training, and project work. Additionally library facilities are available on site, which provide an extensive range of resources e.g. access to electronic databases both internal and external to the hospital network.

Since our move we have continued to develop in order to achieve our aims and deliver a quality nursing service to our patients. There has been a continued development of our nursing roles and services and further information on our activities and developments can be found in our Annual Reports on the Intranet or on the Internet at <http://www.nire.ie/index.asp?locID=600&docID=-1>

Demands on our service have continue to increase over the years. Since opening in 1998 there has been 109,966 In-patients, 228,456 Day Cases, 1,100,000 Out Patient Clinic attendances and 742,466 Accident and Emergency new attendances in both the adult and children's services. In addition the increased demands can be seen by comparing our annual through put for the year 1999 as compared with the year 2008:

	<b>1999</b>	<b>2008</b>
In patients	17,259	24,140
Day Cases	14,320	28,572
Out Patient Clinic Attendances	104,209	228,995
Accident and Emergency New Attendances	65,484	73,534

Concurrently other demands such as the Health Strategy, increases in our population and a rapidly changing healthcare service have prompted the need for a more diverse service delivery. With increased demands the AMNCH nursing have responded by diversifying to meet the challenges of these demands and the needs of our patients. We recognised that we need to continue to respond to these opportunities and challenges. In addition we have been an active member of the Dublin Academic Teaching Hospitals (DATH's) group since its inception in the late 1990's. The group has worked together on numerous initiatives and activities over the years.

A more recent activity of the group was the development of a joint Nursing Strategy 2009-2012 “*LEADING THE WAY IN QUALITY PATIENT CARE*”<sup>15</sup> which was set in the “*context of the HSE Transformation Programme.*”<sup>15</sup> It aims to

*“enhance the ability of the DATH’s to provide excellent care to patients and their families.....focuses on patients and on the delivery of the highest quality patient care.... provides a clear direction for the continued growth and development of Nursing.”*<sup>15</sup>

The principles that underpin the strategy are “*compassion, empathy, equity and advocacy for patients.*”<sup>15</sup> It’s strategic goals include:

- ✦ Service Delivery: Ensure best practice and the highest standard of care delivery.
- ✦ Leadership: Provide strategic and effective leadership both locally and nationally in order to influence the quality and safety of patient care delivery.
- ✦ Research, Education, Training and Professional Development: Continue to provide high quality research, education, training and professional development for all within the nursing service and multidisciplinary team.
- ✦ Human Resource Management: Develop Human Resources ability to maintain and develop our status as employers of choice. In addition provide challenging, motivating and rewarding work for our employees in an innovative, creative and development orientated environment.

All of the goals have clearly defined objectives, associated performance measures, actions, timeframes and include identification of who is responsible for them.

As a result of the launch of the DATH’s nursing strategy the AMNCH nursing service is currently developing their own local strategy so that we will continue to be focused on maintaining and improving the quality of care delivered to our patients.



# *The Future*



## The Future

All in all the AMNCH Nursing service continues to be at the forefront of nursing development in the twenty-first century.

As we go forward we will continue to strive to create, maintain and continuously develop a centre of excellence for Nursing in the hospital. In addition we will continue to facilitate and provide a clinical learning environment for nurses and students in order to support the attainment of knowledge and skills and in turn provide an evidence based quality nursing service to our patients.

As evident from the history of our nursing service, from 1859 to the present day, we are born out of a tradition of nursing excellence in the delivery of nursing care which keeps the patient at the centre of all of our endeavours. We will, in the future, in all of our endeavours, developments and activities continue with this tradition.

In keeping with our aims there are many major national initiatives which we will embrace for the betterment of our patient care delivery which include:

- ✔ Nurse prescribing.
- ✔ XRay prescribing.
- ✔ Venepuncture and Intravenous cannulation.

In doing so we will never forget the significance of fundamental nursing care and will continue to keep the patient at the centre of our role.

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