

# ICGP Strategic Plan 2008 – 2013

A Discussion Document



The Irish College  
of General Practitioners  
*Coláiste Dhochtúirí Teaghlaigh Éireann*  
The Professional Body for General Practice in Ireland



January, 2008

**To all members**

## **ICGP STRATEGIC PLAN 2008 – 2013**

### **A Discussion Document**

Dear Member,

Since inception the College has developed and prioritised its activities by way of periodic strategic planning in consultation with members. The process for the 2008 - 2013 plan commenced last autumn.

Attached herewith is a draft plan for your consideration and input. It is imperative that the widest discussion takes place as the priorities of the College must reflect the views of members and also contribute to the extensive rationalisation and changes currently ongoing within the health services.

This document is also being forwarded to your Faculty for consideration and in addition it is intended to arrange for a number of regional meetings during the coming months. It is open to you to make an individual submission either in writing to myself at the ICGP offices or by email to [info@icgp.ie](mailto:info@icgp.ie) marked 'Strategic Plan'. This draft document will be considered by the College Council on Saturday, 1st March, and if you wish your Faculty representative to raise any specific issues please advise him/her.

This strategic plan is a "live plan" and hence will be reviewed periodically by the College Council, in consultation with members, to take into account changing College priorities and developments in the health sector generally. It is intended that this phase of the consultation process will conclude by end April 2008 in order that a final document can be presented and debated at the College AGM in Galway, on Saturday 18th May, 2008.

I look forward to your participation in this important process which will direct the future development and work of the College on your behalf and ensure the appropriate development of the specialty of general practice in the context of our stated goals.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Mark Walsh,  
Chairman.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2008 – 2013

The primary aim of the Irish College General Practitioners (ICGP) is to serve the patient, and the members / general practitioners by encouraging and maintaining the highest standards of general medical practice. The core values of the College are quality, equity, access and service to the patient. Strategic priorities are based on these core values. College priorities are to consolidate research, reinforce and support high quality, personal doctoring and the training and education that go with it. We aim to lead by being creative regarding the potential of general practice while robustly consolidating positive aspects of current care.

The ICGP has adopted the European definition of the Discipline and Specialty of General Practice / Family Medicine (2002) which states that **“General Practice is an academic and scientific discipline and a clinical specialty with its own educational content, research and evidence base and clinical activity, oriented to primary care.”**

**“General Practitioners/family doctors are specialist physicians trained in the principles of the discipline. They are personal doctors, primarily responsible for the provision of comprehensive and continuing care to every individual seeking medical care irrespective of age, sex and illness. They care for individuals in the context of their family, their community and their culture, always respecting the autonomy of their patients. They recognise they will also have a professional responsibility to their community. In negotiating management plans with their patients they integrate physical, psychological, social, cultural and existential factors, utilising the knowledge and trust engendered by repeated contacts. General Practitioners/family physicians exercise their professional role by promoting health, preventing disease and providing cure, care, or palliation. This is done either directly or through the services of others according to the health needs and resources available within the community they serve, assisting patients where necessary in accessing these services. They must take the responsibility for developing and maintaining their skills, personal balance and values as a basis for effective and safe health care.”**

The College was founded in 1984 and is based in Lincoln Place, Dublin 2. It is the professional organisation for general medical practice in Ireland, providing education and training, undertaking research and setting standards. The College is recognised by the Medical Council as the accredited academic body for the specialty of general practice including the accreditation of specialist training in general practice in Ireland.

At an international level the College is a member of the World Organisation of Family Doctors (WONCA).

The ICGP has applied strategic planning since inception. This plan is to inform members, the public and the College divisions and structures for the period ahead.

### Goals

- A healthier community
1. through high quality general practice,
  2. with a sustainable GP workforce,
  3. with effective working relationships across the health sector
  4. and a vibrant College in support.

**GOAL 1: A healthier community through high quality general practice**

Strategic Areas	Strategic Actions	Action Plans
Primacy of the patient	Focus on the patient / doctor relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explore the development of a patient/doctor contract to enable the patient to take responsibility for their own health</li> <li>▪ Develop a policy on confidentiality of the patient record and patient consent and adopt it</li> <li>▪ Define the role of the GP as personal doctor and how continuity of care is best maintained</li> <li>▪ Continue to advocate for universal patient registration</li> </ul>
	Ensure patient choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support diversity of models of general practice i.e. single-handed, group, larger and smaller teams</li> <li>▪ Continue to develop business models to support diversity</li> <li>▪ Review models of out of hours care</li> <li>▪ Promote inter-referral between general practitioners</li> </ul>
	Advocate for best care for the patient at practice, local and national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shape health care policy through interactions with government, the public, and the health sector</li> <li>▪ Use professional and media networks to respond in a timely, credible manner to issues that arise and to set agendas in the public domain</li> </ul>
	Focus on areas of specific need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify a small range of areas where the ICGP can make a measurable difference in reducing health inequalities</li> </ul>
Patient involvement	Create opportunities for enhanced collaboration with patients, patient interest groups and consumer groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a model for involvement in research, service development and quality improvement initiatives</li> </ul>
Quality general practice	Identify and develop a range of quality initiatives to enhance general practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop and test quality indicators for general practice</li> <li>▪ Develop and disseminate impact documents on important clinical issues</li> <li>▪ Explore mechanisms for incentivising quality improvement activities</li> <li>▪ Support quality initiatives</li> </ul>

Strategic Areas	Strategic Actions	Action Plans
	Clarify and facilitate the role of the GP in primary care teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Investigate the strengths and limitations of team-based approaches to general practice</li> <li>▪ Develop policy positions on major systemic and structural issues impacting on the quality of care</li> </ul>
	Maintain the status/role of the GP as an independent service provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advocate for any issue affecting the quality of general practice including practice management, career development and workforce issues</li> <li>▪ Advocate for contractual arrangements that reflect career expectations of current and future GPs</li> </ul>
	Provide high quality care across the clinical spectrum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assume a leadership role in health promotion, disease prevention and chronic disease management</li> <li>▪ Promote the HeartWatch approach as a model of care for all chronic diseases</li> <li>▪ Advocate for direct access to diagnostic tests to facilitate diagnosis and management within general practice</li> <li>▪ Participate in evidence-based, quality screening programmes</li> </ul>
	Contribute to the evidence base that underpins quality general practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Take a leadership role in identifying and undertaking research related to general practice</li> <li>▪ Develop relationships with research sector</li> <li>▪ Support the development of research skills, capacity and infrastructure in general practices</li> <li>▪ Expand the Academic Senior Registrar programme</li> <li>▪ Push for career pathways for those involved in education, training and research</li> <li>▪ Maintain and enhance the publications capacity of the ICGP</li> </ul>

**Goal 2: A healthier community with a sustainable general practice workforce**

Strategic Areas	Strategic Actions	Action Plans
General practice as a discipline	Celebrate general practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote the achievements of GPs and their sense of pride in their work</li> </ul>
	Promote inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Embed our definition of general practice in education, training and the core curriculum</li> <li>▪ Provide for alternative routes to membership, without compromise to standards</li> <li>▪ Expand mutual recognition with sister colleges where we are assured of equivalent high standards</li> <li>▪ Further develop and resource the process for reviewing applications for specialist registration</li> </ul>
Workforce planning	Ensure a workforce of general practitioners which is sufficient to meet the needs of patients and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to press for a GP manpower review</li> <li>▪ Collaborate in defining and developing the roles and responsibilities of GPs and practice nurses</li> <li>▪ Support the development of smooth entry and exit pathways from practice</li> </ul>
GP training	Promote general practice as a career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide career advice and facilitate access to career management skills</li> <li>▪ Press for the establishment of a Medical Education, Training &amp; Research Unit distinct from the HSE</li> </ul>
	Recruit and train high quality general practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote and facilitate the expansion of GP training in line with manpower needs</li> <li>▪ Develop flexible GP training</li> <li>▪ Continue to develop and promote the MICGP examination process as a credible, valid and accessible marker of general practice competence</li> <li>▪ Map the core curriculum to the MICGP examination and satisfactory completion of training</li> <li>▪ Continue to develop the accreditation of training programmes</li> </ul>

Strategic Areas	Strategic Actions	Action Plans
GP professional development	Continue as the lead organisation for GP professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quantify the needs of GPs in clinical and practice management areas</li> <li>▪ Ensure that College understands and responds to needs of its differing groups</li> <li>▪ Secure external accreditation for education courses to assure quality and to facilitate interdisciplinary education</li> <li>▪ Ensure that membership of the College provides tangible benefits</li> </ul>
	Support GPs to attain and maintain excellence in clinical practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to provide a broad range of CPD opportunities with diverse modes of delivery</li> <li>▪ Ensure that College courses are responsive to members' needs and health sector priorities</li> <li>▪ Maintain and enhance the capacity of the ICGP's library and website to support the pursuit of clinical excellence</li> <li>▪ Explore the potential roles of GP mentors</li> <li>▪ Explore the education and training needs of GPs with special interests</li> <li>▪ Develop support structures for GPs requiring remediation</li> <li>▪ Continue to enhance business skill in general practice and to develop management capacity</li> </ul>
Healthier workforce	Promote healthier general practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop life skills, time management and stopping work courses</li> <li>▪ Provide guidelines for GPs who have concerns about the health of a colleague</li> <li>▪ Explore opportunities for collaboration with other postgraduate training bodies</li> </ul>
	Support GPs and their families who develop health problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhance and further develop the Health in Practice Programme</li> <li>▪ Extend HiPP to address the health needs of practice staff</li> </ul>
Interdisciplinary models of learning	Promote shared learning across the education spectrum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support shared learning opportunities with practice nurses, practice managers and other health staff</li> <li>▪ Facilitate interdisciplinary training with other community-based specialities</li> </ul>

**Goal 3: A healthier community with effective working relationships across the health sector**

<b>Strategic Area</b>	<b>Strategic Actions</b>	<b>Action Plans</b>
Key organisations	Issues for general practice and their patients are raised and addressed with the most appropriate people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain and enhance relationships with Government, Minister for Health and Children, HSE and others</li> <li>▪ Continue to contribute to the activities of the Forum for Postgraduate Training Bodies</li> <li>▪ Maintain active liaison with the IMO</li> </ul>
	Collaborate to provide high quality general practice care to agreed standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with the Medical Council to develop professional competence structures</li> <li>▪ Collaborate with Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) in areas impacting on general practice</li> </ul>
Interfaces in care	Increase the effectiveness of interactions within primary care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthen working relationships and agreements with practice nurse organisations</li> <li>▪ Develop working relationships with other primary care / community-based professionals</li> <li>▪ Develop a policy on sharing relevant components of patient medical record with other primary care professionals</li> </ul>
	Increase the effectiveness of interactions between primary and secondary care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inform / promote understanding of the specialty of general practice and the role of the GP in the patient's care</li> <li>▪ Work with secondary care towards applying a culture of integrated management to all patient care</li> <li>▪ Establish links with clinicians in management activities across the sector</li> </ul>
International links	Share learning internationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage participation of GPs in international work</li> <li>▪ Encourage participation of members of international colleges in ongoing activities of the College</li> <li>▪ Promote ongoing involvement in WONCA programmes</li> <li>▪ Identify opportunities for collaboration with sister colleges of general practice</li> <li>▪ Develop outreach initiatives to countries establishing general practice structures</li> </ul>

**Goal 4: A healthier community with a vibrant College in support**

Strategic Area	Strategic Actions	Action Plans
Leadership	Facilitate the development of leadership skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focus on leadership skills development of college members in positions of responsibility at national and local levels</li> <li>▪ Identify and support emerging leaders</li> <li>▪ Arrange for realistic reimbursement of out of pocket expenses for representation on boards and committees</li> <li>▪ Develop a framework for College representatives</li> </ul>
Membership participation	College structure and operation encourage members input and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review faculty structure</li> <li>▪ Ensure effective communication to members of matters affecting general practice and the College</li> <li>▪ Ensure a cross-section of GPs on College committees and in arenas where the profession / ICGP is represented</li> <li>▪ Integrate new and establishing GPs into all College activities</li> </ul>
Good governance	Ensure appropriate governance for all activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that standing committees are supported, enabled and aligned with strategic plan</li> <li>▪ Achieve effective decision making while ensuring the membership is appropriately represented</li> <li>▪ Ensure that decisions are made and implemented at the appropriate level within the College</li> </ul>

Strategic Areas	Strategic Actions	Action Plans
Effective management	Apply best business practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop internal management structures aligned with strategic plan and standing committees' activities</li> <li>▪ Use modern IT and conferencing facilities more effectively to deliver College tasks</li> <li>▪ Ensure appropriate policies, procedures and infrastructure are in place to provide effective storage, management and access to data in compliance with Data Protection legislation</li> <li>▪ Support the development of best practice human resource management processes</li> <li>▪ Review and prioritise workload across all areas annually to reflect strategic priorities and available resources</li> </ul>
	Maintain financial viability through responsible fiscal management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthen existing and develop new sources of revenue</li> <li>▪ Monitor and modify expenditure as necessary to fall within budget</li> </ul>
Organisational continuity	Ensure that the College organisation is fit for purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recruit, induct, retain and develop a high quality and professional workforce</li> <li>▪ Provide accommodation for the College sufficient to deliver the strategic plan</li> <li>▪ Facilitate a safe and healthy working environment for all college staff</li> <li>▪ Ensure succession planning</li> </ul>





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