

## HEALTH NEEDS ANALYSIS OF THE POPULATION OF COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE NETWORKS IN MEATH AND LOUTH

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### INTRODUCTION

The **Sláintecare<sup>1</sup>** model of integrated healthcare aims to deliver health care closer to home, allowing users to access services in their own geographical area

The Integrated Care Framework outlines **10 essential steps** to enable integrated care to be established, evaluated and sustained

One of these key steps is to undertake **Population Planning** of the local area in order to identify trends and enable targeted service planning and delivery specific to that population

### BACKGROUND

The **Enhanced Community Care (ECC) model** is based on population profiling of geographical areas, aiming to ensure that each network area of approximately 50,000 people will be serviced by one Community Health Network (CHN), with equity of service provision within the 96 CHNs nationally

However, each CHN area may have similar yet differing healthcare needs. Two CHNs with a similar overall population number may have vastly different healthcare needs, depending on factors such as age profile, socioeconomic factors, levels of disability, rural/urban divide, access to healthcare facilities and access to transport and social supports

In addition, the model recognises the unique challenges of providing healthcare to older people and to those with chronic disease, especially Cardiovascular, Respiratory disease and Diabetes and the importance of integrating care for these people to maintain independent community living, by developing specialist community teams to tackle these target groups under the umbrella of the Integrated Care Programme for Older Persons (ICPOP) and the Integrated Care Programme for Chronic Disease Management (ICPCD), with one ICPOP and one ICPCD team per three CHNs

The Louth and Meath area lies in the North East of the country covering a geographical area of 3168 km<sup>2</sup>. It is divided into six CHNs; CHN1 – North Louth, CHN2 – North Meath and Ardee, CHN3 - South Louth and Bettystown, CHN4 – Central Meath, CHN5 – East Meath and CHN6 – Southwest Meath

### AIMS

The aims of this study are to

- identify the key health and social care priorities for the population of each CHN in Louth and Meath and the integrated care teams for Older Persons and Chronic Disease (ICPOP and ICPCD) who work alongside the CHNs
- inform decision making around resource allocation and service provision, facilities development and the wider local community and population –based systems
- plan and develop an integrated, sustainable model for the provision of health and social care in to the future for the population of Meath and Louth

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### METHODS

**Data Collection:** CSO and Health Atlas<sup>2</sup> data was analysed to provide details of current and projected estimates of population demographics in each CHN including youth populations, older persons populations, population diversity, levels of deprivation, levels of chronic disease and disability

**Local knowledge:** information on current and historic services were collated in consultation with a broad range of colleagues and managers from Primary Care Services, GP Liaison, Older Persons Services, Disability Services, Mental Health Services, Health & Wellbeing, Specialist Palliative Care, Section 38/39 Agencies, Acute hospitals (Our Lady of Lourdes, Drogheda and Our Lady's Hospital, Navan), Social Inclusion, Community and Voluntary sector



FIGURE 1 showing sources of information in preparation of document

### RESULTS

#### Key Results

- Population of 5/6 CHNs in Louth and Meath exceed recommended 50,000 (red line) with particular impact on ICPOP/CD teams in Louth
- The diversity of population and needs varies greatly across the networks, with certain areas, particularly North Meath and North Louth having a significant older population, while the South Louth and Central Meath areas have a greater proportion of young families. North Louth has particularly disadvantaged demographic and higher levels of chronic disease compared with East Meath or Southwest Meath –all of which provide unique local challenges
- Access to healthcare facilities, such as proximity to primary care centres, hospitals, and transport links also vary greatly across the networks
- Service provision varies across networks due to local challenges with suitable accommodation and staff recruitment and retention

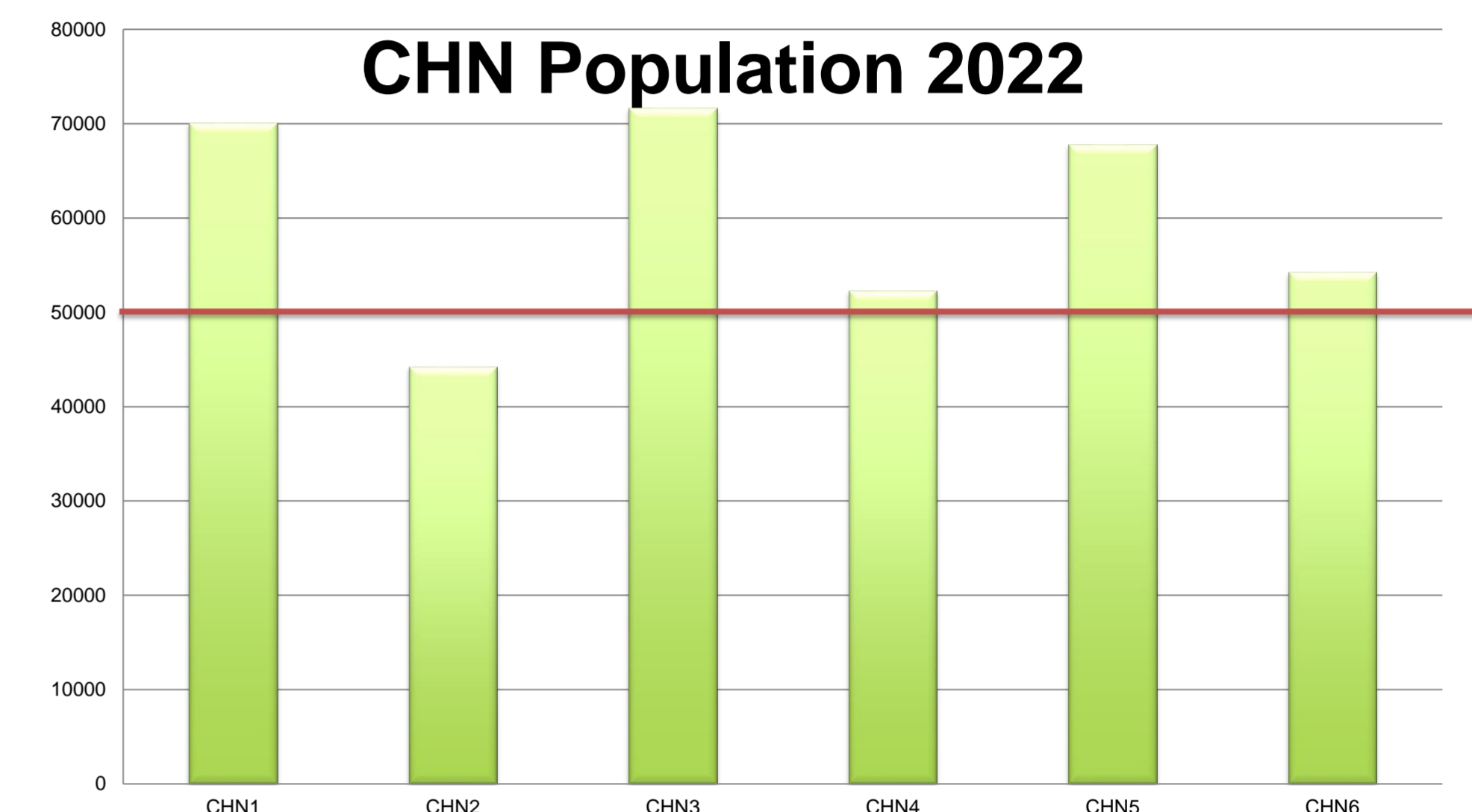


FIGURE 2 showing projected population of each CHN 2022

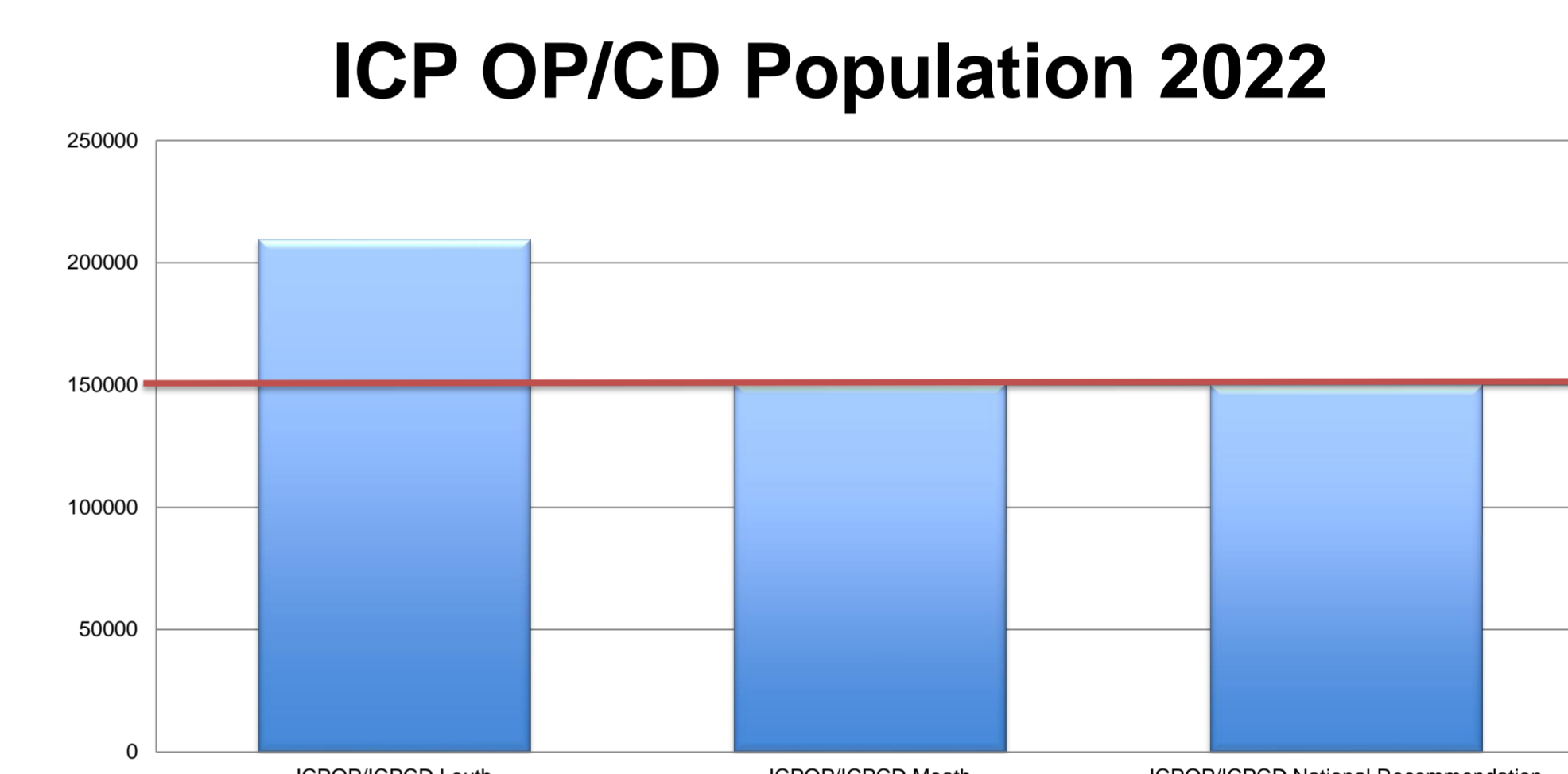


FIGURE 3 showing projected population of each ICP OP/CD area 2022

### IMPLICATIONS FOR ECC

- The data highlights that the Louth/Meath area has a greater population than the recommended 50,000 per CHN envisaged when designing the CHN model. This may have implications as we move towards the new Regional Healthcare Area (RHA) structure, and requires resources to be allocated based on the population as opposed to a blanket network allocation irrespective of actual population numbers
- Population demographics and diversity affect the services in demand in each area and should be taken into consideration in allocating resources to best meet the needs of the local population, such as in to Older Persons, Child Health, and preventative care
- Local challenges to delivering healthcare such as access to appropriate accommodation, and staff recruitment and retention need to be addressed
- Transport links and access to healthcare need to be considered when designing and delivering care

This Population Profile and Health Needs Analysis evidences that there are excellent examples of integrated health and social care delivery across the Louth/Meath networks despite the numerous challenges, and it is important that we learn from these successes and aim to upscale across the other areas

Whilst it is recognised that there should be equity of services across the networks, it is important to acknowledge those areas that have developed new ways of working and efficient models of care, and strive to deliver such care in the mainstream or at least provide access to such care where feasible across the region

### REFERENCES

1. Sláintecare Action Plan 2022 - <https://assets.gov.ie/226519/9aefe8a9-9e85-4bbd-8876-458301609db8.pdf>
2. Health Atlas - <https://www.healthatlasireland.ie/>