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Profile of a Nurse-led Student Medical Centre in a Higher Education Institute. Medical Centre, Institute of Technology Carlow, Ireland

Theresa Lowry-Lehnen

The Medical Centre: Institute of Technology Carlow, Ireland

Student populations continue to grow year-on-year and so does the demand for student health services in third-level education. Latest figures show that in the academic year 2016/17 there were 225,628 students in third-level education in Ireland. The number of full-time undergraduate students has increased by 10% in the last five years (HEA, 2018).

This presentation profiles a nurse-led, walk-in medical centre at Institute of Technology Carlow, the third largest of fourteen Institutes of Technology in Ireland, with a total student population of 8,400 (ITC, 2018). The Medical Centre operates term-time and is available to all full-time students and as an emergency service for staff at the Carlow Campus. There is one full-time nurse, working 40 hours per week. Visiting doctors attend for nurse-triaged, appointment-based clinics 1.5 hours a day, four days a week. Nursing services are provided free for all students. Doctor appointments are free for General Medical Services (GMS) patients (medical card, GP visit card, and Erasmus EHC card holders) and cost 10 Euro for non-GMS patients.

This profile outlines the range of medical services provided at I.T. Carlow medical centre and presents quantitative data over a three-year period from 2015-2018, on the number of nurse triage consultations, doctor appointments, nurse-only appointments, mental health and STI statistics. It also provides

some social demographic statistics collated through GMS and non-GMS attendance.

In 2017/18, an in-depth Student Services Department PSS (Professional Support Services) review of all student services at Institute of Technology Carlow was undertaken. An external expert panel review followed in May 2018, providing feedback and recommendations based on the PSS review, inspection of services and meetings with staff. This profile includes the findings and recommendations of the PSS and external expert panel review of the Medical Centre. It highlights the current high student and staff satisfaction ratings with the medical service, and considers areas for future development as student numbers continue to rise.

Speaker Biography

Theresa Lowry-Lehnen is qualified as a specialist practitioner in General Practice Nursing and a Teacher of Science. She has a PhD in Health Psychology, and has published a number of books and medical journal articles. Theresa is a graduate of MMUH, The Open University, NUIM, St. Mary's Teacher Training University College, London, The University of Surrey, and is a registered Teacher with the Teaching Council of Ireland. She has over 30 years' experience in clinical nursing practice, combining her practice with 14 years in educational, teaching and lecturing roles. Theresa was shortlisted for the 'Practice Nurse of the Year' Award 2018, at the GP National Awards in Ireland, and has recently published a new book, *Practice Nursing: Clinical Guidelines and Procedures in Practice*. She is currently employed as an Associate Lecturer and the full-time Practice Nurse at the Medical Centre, Institute of Technology Carlow, Ireland.

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