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Witness Statement Ref No

**WITNESS STATEMENT TO THE PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO THE OUTBREAK OF
CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE IN NORTHERN TRUST HOSPITALS**

WITNESS NAME: DOREEN DUFFY

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE

I, Doreen Duffy, say as follows:

1. I am making this statement at the request of the Clostridium Difficile Public Inquiry. My address is known to the Inquiry. I am 77 years of age and live at home with my husband William Duffy.
2. My evidence relates to three separate admissions to hospitals in the period of the Clostridium Difficile ("C diff") outbreak. I was admitted to Mid Ulster Hospital in December 2007 and to Antrim Area Hospital on or about mid to late January 2008 and again to Antrim on 24th March 2008.
3. Prior to my first admission to hospital suffering from C diff I was mobile and went 'out and about'. My only substantial medical problem was bronchiectasis (a chest complaint) which was diagnosed in November 2007, although I had always suffered from asthma and had episodes of bronchitis. I had received two courses of antibiotics in respect of the bronchiectasis just prior to diarrhoea starting in December 2007.

First admission to Mid Ulster Hospital

4. On Christmas Day 2007 I attended at Mid Ulster Hospital ("MUH") Magherafelt because I had bad diarrhoea and a very sore stomach. I was not diagnosed with anything at that time and was sent home. The next day (26th December 2007) the symptoms were still as bad so I returned to MUH and this time I was admitted to Ward I think I remained in hospital for two to three weeks but I am not really sure of the length of time. When I was discharged my symptoms had cleared entirely.
5. Ward 3 is on the first floor of the main building of MUH. I was initially in a two bedded room in that ward with another lady. This was before I was diagnosed and I was there for less than a week. This room did not have its own separate toilet or bathroom.
6. I was moved then to a single room on the left hand side of Ward 3 and later put in a general bay with seven or eight other patients.
7. In the single room I had my own separate toilet and washing facilities. There was no notice placed on my door.

Diagnosis of C diff and communication at MUH

8. I do not recall being told that I had the C diff infection nor given any information about it. I was not given any leaflet. My view is that part of that is my own fault as I did not ask anything.
9. I know more now about the infection because I have had it twice since.

Patient care and treatment in Ward 3 MUH

10. The care I received in Ward 3 as a whole that time was good. I consider that the attention given to me by all staff was very good as was their attitude towards me.

11. I am not aware whether any other patients had the same symptoms as me.

12. In respect of the single room I was in I did not feel I was on my own as the door was left open and I could see out onto the ward. Nurses came in and out to me frequently.

Hygienic precautions in MUH

13. I do not remember if myself or my family were given guidance on specific hygienic precautions to take. I was not told anything about washing my hands.

14. My husband brought my pyjamas back to one of my three daughters for washing. My laundry was in an ordinary hospital bag and I do not recall it being soiled with faeces. At the time I was wearing pads which may have prevented my laundry becoming soiled.

15. Hand basins were available with soap. Both the doctors and nurses washed their hands before treating me. The nurses also wore gloves but I do not remember if they wore aprons. I think the support staff who brought in food or did cleaning did not wear gloves or aprons.

16. When I was in a single room I saw my visitors wash their hands in the basin there. When in the double room and the general bay I did not see if they washed their hands.

17. My visitors at no time wore gloves or aprons and neither did any other patients' visitors that I saw.

Cleanliness of MUH

18. I witnessed cleaning taking place. The cleaners came twice a day (in the morning and then the evening). The standard of cleanliness of all areas of

Ward 3 that I was in was very good. Beds were kept clean and sheets changed regularly. Toilets, lockers and general areas were all kept clean. There was no general bad smell in the ward.

Second episode of C diff

19. I no longer had diarrhoea when discharged from MUH and my general state of health had returned to normal more or less. This was probably mid-January 2008. However I was only home a short time when diarrhoea returned. The symptoms were very severe this second time. At the time I was using an inhaler for my chest complaint but not taking antibiotics.

20. My daughter Anne brought me to Accident and Emergency Department of MUH from where I was taken by ambulance that same day to Antrim Area Hospital Accident and Emergency.

Admission to Antrim Area Hospital

21. Antrim A&E Department sent me straight up to Ward A1 (which I know as "Laurel Ward"). I was in a single room in that ward and remained in it throughout my stay. It was on the left hand side when you went through the ward and there was a nurses' station outside it. It had its own bathroom and toilet.

22. I am unsure how long I stayed in Antrim Hospital this time. I know that my stay was at least three weeks and less than a number of months. I think the diarrhoea persisted until a day or two before discharge.

Diagnosis of C diff, treatment and patient care - Antrim Hospital

23. I do not recall being told that I was suffering from C diff. I was receiving antibiotics via a drip. I consider the standard of treatment I got was good. My impression was that the nurses were short staffed. Because I was in a room on my own they only came in when they needed to do something for me. I

had a buzzer to call a nurse if required. They were very busy and, depending on what they were already doing, they usually came quite quickly.

24. In respect of nurses' attitude to me, some were nice and others not so nice.

This was just different personalities. With some I felt sometimes that I was a nuisance to them.

25. The doctors were always very nice to me and I feel I received enough attention from them. I recall that on either this stay in Antrim or the subsequent stay a surgeon at one stage told me he thought I would need a colostomy bag fitted because my colon was not working properly. Later I was told that this was not required.

26. I found the attitude of support staff to be fine as well.

Effects of isolation- Antrim Hospital

27. I did not like being in isolation one bit. But this was just the way it was and it was not anybody's fault. At that time I was too sick to read or even say my prayers.

Information given about C diff-Antrim Hospital

28. I was not given any information about the infection itself and I did not ask for any. As far as I am aware my family were not given any verbal information other than hygienic precautions to take and they were not provided with any leaflets.

Hygienic precautions-Antrim Hospital

29. My family when visiting me always wore aprons and gloves and removed them on leaving. They had been told to do this. There was a closed bin in which to dispose of them in the area outside my room where they originally

put them on. They also washed their hands in a hand basin outside my room before putting on gloves and entering.

30. I remember one specific time when my husband left my room without taking off the aprons and gloves and a nurse ushered him back. He was not permitted to enter the main corridor of A1 still wearing the used protective clothing.

31. I assumed that the hospital staff washed their hands in the hand basin outside my room. When they entered my room they were already wearing gloves and aprons.

32. In respect of my laundry, I recall an occasion when I awoke one morning and I was badly soiled. I waved to a nurse who was attending other patients to assist me. It was a good while before she came as she finished what she was already doing. She and another nurse then came and cleaned up. My nightwear and the bed linen were taken away by them for burning. There were other times that this happened as well, when the diarrhoea was particularly bad.

33. Other than that, my three daughters took my nightwear home to wash.

34. The pads I wore protected my nightwear from soiling in general (apart from the occasions I refer to above). The laundry was put into hospital bags that can be placed directly into a washing machine and disintegrate in the machine.

Cleanliness-Antrim Hospital

35. The ward was cleaned twice a day. First in the morning and then in the evening.

36. On two separate occasions a middle aged male cleaner did not clean my bathroom. I told a student nurse about this (I think on both occasions) but

nothing was done, in that no-one came to clean it. But I am unsure if this occurred on my first stay in Antrim or my second.

37. Apart from those times my bathroom was cleaned and the other areas were kept clean. There were hand basins and the soap was kept replenished.

38. I cannot give accurate dates about the length of stay in Antrim Hospital. I may have been admitted around late January 2008 and was there for a number of weeks.

Third episode of C diff

39. I had been discharged home a while when I subsequently took another bout of the C diff infection. I cannot say how long I had been home but it was probably a few weeks. The symptoms were very bad this time.

Second admission to Antrim Area Hospital

40. On 24th March 2008, which was Easter Monday, I was brought by ambulance to the A&E Department of Antrim Area Hospital as a result of severe diarrhoea. I had an episode of diarrhoea in the ambulance and in a cubicle at A&E in the hospital. My husband William was with me, and due to the severity of my symptoms, he recalls the details of my admission somewhat better than I do and he will give a statement of evidence to the Inquiry. I can recall that I was discharged on 8th April 2008.

41. I do remember being admitted to a bay in a ward with elderly ladies but do not recall which ward that was. I was then put in a single room on my own in A1 Ward. That room had its own bathroom and toilet: it was close to the room I had been admitted to on my last stay at Antrim Area Hospital and on the same side of the ward as it. I was not transferred from that single room and stayed there until discharge home on 8th April 2008.

Diagnosis of C diff and patient care- 2nd stay in Antrim Hospital

42. I was aware that I was suffering from C diff but no-one actually told me this. It was not referred to at all by nurses or doctors. The symptoms were quite constant and I was receiving tablets and on a drip.
43. My experience of patient care was more or less the same as on my previous admission to Antrim Area Hospital.
44. I generally washed myself and changed my pyjamas. I recall one morning when I could not get up due to the severity of the diarrhoea. The bed was a mess and I lay in it until the nurse arrived. This seemed like a long time then but it probably was not really. And as I have said before, I thought they were short staffed which would affect the amount of time it takes to get assistance.
45. In respect of the attitude of nurses to me, there were some very nice ones but others who were not so nice. I felt this was because of the C diff symptoms, that for some nurses you were just a 'toil' to them. By that I mean having to clean up the diarrhoea seemed to be burdensome to them.
46. I was happy with the attention I received from doctors. Every Monday a different consultant would be assigned for the week and I was content with that as one knew the same information as the other.
47. I found the attitude of support staff to be very nice.

Isolation and its effects- 2nd stay Antrim Hospital

48. I had the same experience as before in that I did not like being in isolation. But I do not think that anything could have been done to make the experience better because when you're in isolation, you're in isolation! All I did was watch the wind turbines from my window.

49. I was not given any more information regarding C diff or hygienic precautions to take other than what I was told on my previous stay in Ward A1. At one stage I thought that I was dying.

50. Again there were some occasions when my pyjamas were taken away by staff to be burnt. I was wearing very large pads throughout my stay.

Cleanliness-2nd stay Antrim Hospital

51. The standard of cleanliness was the same as on my previous stay at Antrim Hospital. Underneath the bed would be cleaned and the surfaces dusted.

Hygienic precautions-2nd stay Antrim Hospital

52. Doctors, nurses and support staff and my visitors used the wash hand basins and wore gloves and aprons at all times entering my room.

Long term effects of C diff

53. When I came out of hospital on the last occasion I weighed only six stone. I had been nine stone which would be the right weight for my build. I started losing weight when I developed bronchiectasis but I think it was C diff that caused me to lose the most. I weigh seven stone and a few pounds now.

54. My womb and my bladder have been affected. I still wear pads for incontinence and blame that on the C diff infection.

55. I sometimes dwell on the symptoms I suffered. The illness wrecked me and I am not the same person as before. C diff is so demoralising and takes away all your dignity.

I declare that this statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed *Signature Protected*

Date *19th July 2010*.....