

# CCBS – LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

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12/02/2016 - 19/02/2016



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Monday 15 February 2016

North/South Ministerial Council: Health and Food Safety

**Summary:** Mr Hamilton made a statement on the twentieth North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC) meeting in the health and food safety sectoral format, which was held in the NSMC joint secretariat offices in Armagh on Wednesday 20 January 2016.

**Mr Hamilton (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** I wish to make a statement on the twentieth North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC) meeting in the health and food safety sectoral format, which was held in the NSMC joint secretariat offices in Armagh on Wednesday 20 January 2016. Minister Michelle O'Neill MLA and I represented the Northern Ireland Executive at the meeting, while the Irish Government were represented by Leo Varadkar TD, Minister for Health, and Dr James Reilly TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. Minister Varadkar chaired the meeting. This statement has been agreed with Minister O'Neill, and I am making it on behalf of us both.

We agreed that our respective officials will progress deliberations on potential additions to the current work programme and noted that officials have already commenced a review of the child protection agenda work programme. The Council received an update on the ongoing collaboration to maximise the drawdown of EU funding in the health sector and noted that our respective officials continue to seek to identify opportunities to collaborate on the drawdown of EU funds. We also welcomed a presentation from the Health Research Board on Horizon 2020 funding streams in the health sector. The Council was informed that legislation to introduce standardised packaging of tobacco products and to transpose the EU tobacco products directive is expected to come into force in May 2016.

Ministers welcomed the update on suicide prevention initiatives in both jurisdictions. The Council noted that construction of the radiotherapy unit at Altnagelvin hospital is on target and that it is planned that the unit will open and be in operational use by late autumn 2016. We also received updates on the work of the US-Ireland R&D Partnership and on the ongoing work of the All Ireland Institute for Hospice and Palliative Care.

Ministers noted that the child protection work programme agreed at the NSMC meeting in July 2012 continues to be progressed and that a review of the current child protection work programme will be reported at a future NSMC meeting in that sector.

The Council noted the Safefood chief executive officer's report and, in particular, the launch of Safefood's weight-loss app. The Council also noted the Safefood annual report and accounts 2014 and approved the appointment of four new members and one reappointment to Safefood's scientific advisory committee, as well as the appointment of Professor Margaret Patterson as chair of the committee.

Finally, we agreed that the next NSMC health and food safety meeting will be held in the autumn.

**Source:** <http://data.niassembly.gov.uk/HansardXml/plenary-15-02-2016.pdf>



The Houses of the Oireachtas are in their Election Recess at this time.