



Higher Diploma in Applied Communications

News Writing & Reporting
Spring 2001

Examiners: Mr John Cunningham
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Duration: Three hours.

Instructions: Please answer all questions. Question 1 carries 100 marks; question 2 carries 30 marks; question 3 carries 70 marks.

1. You are a reporter for a national newspaper. You have been assigned to cover the official launch of the Irish Kidney Association's National Donor Forget Me Not week by Minister for Health and Children Mr Micheal Martin. You are required to submit a six to eight paragraph report (300 words approx) on the event, incorporating elements of the Minister's speech — summarising its content, giving prominence to its most newsworthy aspect and using direct quotation where appropriate — for publication on the following day.

Speech by the Minister for Health & Children, MrMicheál Martin at the launch of the 2001 National DonoForget-Me-Not week on Wednesday, 28th March, 2001 in Newman House, St. Stephen's Green at 2.45pm

28 March 2001

Chairperson, Ladies and Gentleman, I am very pleased to be here today and to have this opportunity to speak to you on the occasion of the launch of the National DonoForget-Me-Not Week. I was delighted to receive the invitation to do so from Mr Mark Murphy, Chief Executive of the Irish Kidney Association and may I say that I had no hesitation in accepting it.

National DonorForget-Me-Not Week is a very important event in the calendar for the Irish Health Service. It clearly highlights the role of the voluntary sector in the Health Service and demonstrates the benefits of the partnership approach inherent in the Donor for Transplantation Campaign.

Irish Kidney Association

I would like to pay tribute to the members of the Irish Kidney Association in their twenty three branches nation-wide who have been providing information, counselling and respite care for patients and their families since 1978.

During 'Forget-Me-Not' week the importance of organ donation is highlighted and a special plea is made for funding to enable the Irish Kidney Association to continue its tremendous work. The invaluable contribution that the Association has made to research into kidney disease, to public and professional awareness of this complaint, the funds contributed for the purchase of equipment and the counselling services are to be applauded.

Promotion of Organ Donation

The Association plays a vital role in raising public awareness in relation to organ donation and this function is a particularly important one in 2001 when the positive life giving aspect of organ donation must be highlighted to deflect any negative ill informed public perception which may arise resulting from recent organ retention controversies.

I would like to commend the Association for producing a new 'Information Fact File' to accompany donor cards. This information leaflet clearly outlines the facts of donating life and transplanting life as well as addressing all the common questions which arise in relation to this sensitive issue. I am confident this initiative by the Association will prove to be as successful as previous promotion campaigns and I

want to publicly thank Andrea Corr for lending her support to the campaign we are launching here today.

I believe this proactive approach by the Association will reverse the negative downward trend that has emerged in the last year where the refusal rate for families who were asked to consent to transplant rose from 14% in 1999 to 35% in 2000. However, in 2000 there were 71 people whose organs were donated for transplantation and this in turn, benefited 180 patients.

Donor Awareness Week 2001

This year 'Forget-Me-Not' week will run from 31st March to the 7th April and during this week volunteers will be promoting the importance of carrying a donor card and the 'Gift of Life' that organ donation gives to patients.

I am aware that volunteers from the Irish Kidney Association's twenty three branches around the country will be taking part in a variety of fundraising activities and the emblem for donor week, the 'Forget-Me-Not' flower will be on sale all over the country. Last year the sale of these flowers raised £190,000 and I wish the Association every success this year.

Presentation of £175,000 from the National Lottery

In conclusion I would like to take this opportunity of congratulating the Irish Kidney Association on all its productive efforts of the years. I wish them continued success in their work. The National Donor Forget-Me-Not week is a very important week in the Association's calendar and it is essential to constantly remind people of the importance of

carrying Organ Donor Cards. I would also like to emphasise how important it is for relatives of organ donors to be aware of the wishes of potential donors and to be involved in the donation process.

I am very pleased to be able to increase the grant given by my Department to the Irish Kidney Association from the health allocation of the National Lottery Funds. In recognition of the multi-organ donor campaign I have great pleasure in giving a grant of £175,000 to the Association here today. This increased funding will help further promote the existing multi-organ donor campaign.

Conclusion

Finally, I would like to once again thank the Irish Kidney Association for inviting me here today to launch Forget-Me-Not week. It is a task I have great pleasure in performing. I congratulate the association on all its marvellous work over the past twenty three years and wish them many more successful years.

Thank you.

Question 2

- (a) Explain the purpose of quotations in news stories. What should they reveal and why are they so important to the story, both from the reporter's perspective, and from that of the reader?
- (b) In relation to the material provided in Question 1, what other sources could you consult to write a more detailed and lengthy news story?
- (c) In relation to your response to Question 1, explain briefly how you structured your news story and your reasons for taking that approach.

Question 3

The following is an extract from a reporter's notebook. The journalist was sent out to report on a fatal accident which occurred in Galway. You should write a report of about 350 words. In writing about the accident, please refer to the accident as 'yesterday.'

EXTRACT

Accident. Occurred at 8.20a.m. on Salthill Promenade. Garda info. is that two vehicles were in collision. Car driven by Mr. John McGillicuddy (42), a computer engineer. In car also were his children Laura (14), John (9) and Breda (8). Three dead in accident. John McGillicuddy, who was dead when taken from the wreckage, Laura and Breda. Understood that Mr. McGillicuddy was going to work (Allianz Insurance Corp., Fleet Street, Galway, and was doing regular school run with children on his way.

Also involved in crash was earth moving machine owned by Mulqueen Contractors. Machinery was working on new sewerage system which is being laid along promenade. Cause of crash not known.

Gardai got to scene in seconds from nearby Salthill Garda Station. Fire brigade cut all four victims from the car (Honda Civic 1.6), but Mr. McGillicuddy dead at scene. Children taken to University College Hospital, Galway, but Laura was pronounced dead on arrival at hospital. Last evening Breda transferred to Beaumont Hospital, Dublin where had emergency brain operation, but died just before midnight. John (9) still in intensive care at UCHG, but is 'out of danger' according to hospital spokesperson.

At scene Inspector Tony O'Doherty: "We do not know the cause of this awful tragedy ... the Promenade has been especially busy because of amount of work going on on sewerage system, the road had been reduced to two special lanes on one side of the actual roadway and the victims really had no chance of escaping from this crash because of the severity of the impact and the fact that the car was very badly crushed in the collision with the heavy machinery.

"The driver of the earth moving machine has been treated at University College Hospital and was discharged late last night, though still suffering from shock. Fullscale investigation of the accident has been mounted and two post mortems were performed last night, while the third is awaited and will be undertaken at Beaumont Hospital."

Mr. McGillicuddy's widow Joan (40) is being comforted by neighbours and friends. Mrs. McGillicuddy is a Fine Gael member of Galway City Council and was Mayor two years ago. Special Mass is to be held at Galway Cathedral at which the Bishop of Galway Most Rev. Dr. James McLoughlin will preside. Three weeks ago John McGillicuddy had a major win in the National Lottery -- he was part of a syndicate at work which scooped a pool of £5million. His share of the win was £1million. The day previous to the accident the family had bought tickets for a special treat holiday in Disneyland which was to celebrate their Lottery win.