PRESS RELEASE

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Extra Beds at St Bernard's Hospital

The Government considers it disgraceful that the GSD have chosen to make incorrect throwaway remarks in a Press Release regarding bed availability at St Bernard's Hospital when they have already received the correct information in Parliament.

Waiting times for treatment at Accident and Emergency are not dependent on the availability of ward beds. As the Minister for Health told Parliament in its last session, the GHA has had a daily average of 11-15 available ward beds since January. This means that patients can be transferred out of A&E as soon as doctors are satisfied that treatment can continue in a ward.

Minister for Health, the Hon Neil F. Costa, said: 'The GSD are clutching at straws, trying desperately to draw false conclusions. This Government has implemented a number of contingency measures to increase bed availability at St Bernard's Hospital. These include the employment of Specialist GPs and the empowerment of clinicians and doctors to prioritise patient care and support for families, particularly by offering packages of care. The opening of the Dementia Residential Home and additional beds at the Elderly Residential Service will allow St Bernard's Hospital to function primarily as an acute Hospital.

'A more active and effective bed management system, a temporary seven-bed ward, and the introduction of a full time social worker at St Bernard's Hospital has in fact prevented admissions and led to a 100% successful discharge rate. This means that once a patient is discharged from hospital with a package of care, they do not return to hospital with the same problems. Whilst NHS hospitals in the UK were turning people away for lack of beds, the GHA was able to continue working well even at this difficult time of year. As always, I am incredibly grateful to the professional and diligent staff at A&E and throughout the GHA for the excellent work they do to care for our community.'