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Minister for Health opens the Gibraltar Dialysis Patients and Friends Association AGM

The Gibraltar Dialysis Patients and Friends Association held their Annual General Meeting on Sunday 11th February 2019. The Association invited the Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP, to open the meeting.

During his address, Minister Costa highlighted the Gibraltar Health Authority's (GHA) recent investments towards the provision of dialysis treatment in Gibraltar. Mr Costa noted that the number of patients receiving Dialysis at the GHA has increased significantly, from 5 patients in 2005, to over 30 patients at present. The Minister recalled that in July 2017, the GHA appointed Dr Simon Lines, Consultant Nephrologist, to manage the 'Douglas Ferro Dialysis Unit'. In February of 2018, the Unit extended its opening times from 3 days a week to 6 days a week, from Mondays to Saturdays. The change was essential to allow patients the flexibility required to attend to their clinical needs and their everyday activities.

Mr Costa noted that following specialised training of staff, the GHA has also successfully repatriated services, such as renal replacement therapy and plasma exchange, which previously required patients to travel to tertiary centres outside Gibraltar. Earlier this month, the Unit welcomed its very first Charge Nurse, dedicated solely to Dialysis services. Notably, together with the assistance and support of the Gibraltar Dialysis Patients and Friends Association, the GHA has forged close links with Hammersmith Hospital in the UK, in relation to kidney transplantation. In January 2019, the GHA announced the return of the first Gibraltar-based patient to receive a cadaveric renal transplant in the UK for over 15 years. In an example of the GHA's focus in providing this important service as seamlessly as possible, the Gibraltar patient arrived at the UK Hospital before the kidney!

Consultant Nephrologist, Dr Simon Lines also attended the AGM, stated: "Renal services continue to grow and develop to meet the needs of our local population now and for the years to come. This has been possible due to the dedication and hard work of our excellent dialysis nursing team and the support of the GHA. The Gibraltar Dialysis Patients and Friends Association have been key in helping to shape these changes and provide all the important patient perspective."

Ministry of Health, Care and Justice



The President of the Association, Mr Sunil Chandiramani added that “It was a pleasure to have the Minister open our AGM and say a few words on behalf of Her Majesty’s Government of Gibraltar. In particular, I want to thank the Minister for his unwavering support and investment in the provision and improvement of dialysis services in Gibraltar, which will only enhance the patient experience. Indeed, this year’s AGM will trigger the Association’s awareness drive to increase familiarity of kidney disease in Gibraltar. As such, the Association are pleased to announce that Her Majesty’s Government of Gibraltar has approved our request to illuminate the Moorish Castle in green on World Kidney Day which takes place on 14 March 2019. Finally, I would like to express gratitude to all at the staff at the Dialysis Unit and the GHA as their backing is taking the Charity to new heights.”

The Minister also spoke of on-going additional enhancements to the Dialysis Unit, including the building of a new and bigger unit, which is already underway, the purchase of new dialysis software and the upgrading of the Unit’s water plant, to provide both more capacity and the latest in disinfection technology. He commented: “It was a real honour for me to be asked to open the Gibraltar Dialysis Patients and Friends Association’s Annual General meeting. I am a great admirer of the Association, which works diligently in the interests of their members, and all persons receiving Dialysis in our community. The Dialysis Unit has developed significantly over the past 2 years, and continues to do so. The GHA, my Ministry and I will continue to work together with the Association to ensure we continue the development of vital services for our patients. I must sincerely thank the Association’s President, Mr Sunil Chandiramani, the Committee and its members for their kind gesture in asking me to open the AGM, and I wish to re-enforce our pledge to continue in our collaboration for the good of our patients.”