



PRESS STATEMENT

Outraged victims of sexual abuser surgeon Michael Shine support State in fight against religious orders bid to use funds set aside for them

19th February 2023

Dignity4Patients and the victims we support are outraged that the Medical Missionaries of Mary have requested a return of monies from the Indemnity Fund of 1.6 million it agreed with the State in 1997. This fund was set up to pay for the sexual abuse cases they knew were coming down the line. We have evidence that this fund internally in the Department of Health was called 'the Shine Fund'. We understand that an independent expert has been appointed. We strongly support the State in their resistance to any monies being released.

Former surgeon Michael Shine sexually assaulted and sexually abused hundreds of children and young people in his care. One was four years old! Michael Shine used his power as a surgeon to become a prolific sexual abuser. He sexually abused children and young adults over a thirty-year period (1964 – 1993) in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital and associated treatment rooms in Drogheda.

While some adult survivors have received civil redress in the form of compensation via the insurer of the Medical Missionaries of Mary, many are still in protracted criminal justice processes for decades. In fact, for most of their adult lives. Victims are still coming forward.

Dignity4Patients was set up originally with the sole purpose of providing support, advocacy and information to victims and survivors on their justice pathways. Dignity4Patients and the victims and survivors should have been informed by the Medical Missionaries of Mary, the Minister, or the Department of Health that an Independent Expert has been appointed. We now look forward to cooperating with this Independent Expert so they can get a full and meaningful up to date picture of victims ongoing costs in pursuing justice avenues before funds set aside for them are released.

We also understand that an Independent Expert is only appointed where there is disagreement on how much the Religious Order can draw down. We are deeply concerned that an Independent Expert may decide on this without any input from us or the victims and survivors who engage with our services. For whom do they act, if not them?

The money that has accrued through interest in this account should be given over immediately to meet the rights, requests and medical needs of the victims and survivors.

One potential State response to the issue of justice is a Commission of Investigation into Michael Shine, or a broader inquiry into sexual abuse in Ireland, on the back of the calls from

Dignity4Patients, One in Four and others that any inquiry should be a broad-based inquiry into systemic organisational sexual abuse.

Victims and survivors are still suffering over 50 years later. Still waiting for an apology and some formal public acknowledgement to the harms they have suffered. Considering this, monies from the indemnity fund should absolutely NOT go back to the Medical Missionaries of Mary.

We will be contacting all relevant parties in the coming days. We strongly support the State in protecting this money and will absolutely fight tooth and nail on behalf of victims and survivors that the Medical Missionaries of Mary do not receive any payment from this fund.

Press Contact:

Adrienne Reilly CEO

Telephone : 083 088 6301

Email: ceo@dignity4patients.org

Website: www.dignity4patients.org