



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **St Bernard's Hospital Report Notable Increase in the Number of Major Surgeries**

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar is delighted to announce there have been no cancellations of surgical operations due to lack of beds since January 10th 2017. In the same period there has been a notable improvement in performance figures for surgery at St Bernard's Hospital. The number of day surgery procedures carried out is similar to last year, which amounts to 1061 elective surgeries.

The real improvement, however, has been in the number of major surgical cases being successfully seen to. In the first four months of 2017, the GHA has carried out 161 major surgical procedures requiring inpatient stay: nearly double the number performed in the same period in 2016. If the current trend continues, the GHA will conduct almost double the number of major surgeries in 2017 compared to 2016.

The very welcome increase in the number of major operations carried out is thanks to the increased availability of beds at the Dudley Toomey ward, enabling it to cater for an increased number of surgical patients. Through the implementation of an active bed management system including a new, full-time, qualified Social Worker based at St. Bernard's Hospital, and the recent opening of the Hillside Residential Dementia Care facility, the GHA has been able to ensure uninterrupted bed availability in the surgical ward in St Bernard's Hospital.

The Hillside Residential Home now accommodates many of Gibraltar's most vulnerable elderly residents, who will be cared for in an appropriate environment that better caters to their needs. St Bernard's can once again function as an acute hospital.

This is only the first step in improving and expanding the surgical services offered in St Bernard's to further reduce the waiting times for elective procedures.

Ms Sandie Gracia, GHA Director of Nursing said: "The GHA is fully committed to ensuring that all elective surgical patients have their scheduled surgery on their given date. This will guarantee that the clinical needs of our patients who require a planned surgical procedure are met in a timely manner."



Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Hon. Neil F. Costa MP said: “I am extremely excited at the reforms and improvements currently being introduced at the Gibraltar Health Authority, led by our clinical teams. I am committed to continue to work tirelessly with the GHA to improve the quality of our care and to invest further clinical and material resources to increase surgical capacity to achieve progressive reductions in waiting times for operations.

“The Government, GHA and Care Agency are collaborating closely to ensure bed availability for major elective surgery and we are confident that through the combination of measures announced, we can ensure uninterrupted bed availability. My Ministry, in conjunction with the GHA, is now actively planning the repatriation of as many key services as possible to St Bernard’s Hospital, so that fewer patients will need to travel abroad for treatment. I would also like to, as ever, commend the incredibly hardworking GHA staff for their professionalism and dedication in devoting their best efforts to ensure excellent quality care for the community.”