

Pioneering international research into transforming health systems

Catastrophic events over the last decade or so have highlighted the challenge of governing health systems at times of shock. The rapid spread of COVID-19 has severely tested almost all the world's health systems. From 2008, economic austerity affected many high-income countries. Health system resilience is important to help us cope with current and future shocks and improve performance. The RESTORE programme, a five-year Research Leader Award funded by the Health Research Board, investigates how best to enhance health system resilience, achieve reform and improve staff wellbeing in Ireland and internationally.

RESTORE (Towards Dynamic Resilience in Health System Performance and Reform) evaluates the strategies and metrics used to monitor and build health system resilience internationally, and assesses the resilience of the Irish health system before, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. It reviews international experience of managing complex

whole-system reforms such as Sláintecare, and investigates how shocks such as COVID-19 and the 2008 financial crisis challenge or even facilitate reform. A key focus will be how such

“Shocks create opportunities for innovation and long-lasting health system reform. Now is the time to invest in our health systems for better performance.”

Professor Steve Thomas
Edward Kennedy Chair for Health Policy and Reform

shocks affect the Sláintecare programme, and how to ensure its full implementation despite the difficulties. Resilience and reform depend on support from staff, and RESTORE will also focus on HSE staff wellbeing and motivation as both a sign of resilience and a precondition for change.

RESTORE is headed by Professor Steve Thomas, the Edward Kennedy Chair for Health Policy and Management. His team of Irish and international researchers, influencers and policy-makers aims to evaluate and strengthen health system resilience and to share the understanding they gain with policy-makers in governments and agencies such as WHO, OECD and the EU. It will develop evidence-based strategies to enable policy-makers to balance performance against reform and achieve universal care by improving resilience.

