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HSE moves to ease SMOA fears

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The HSE has moved to assure families no decision has been taken to close St Mary of the Angels - less than a week after hundreds of families of residents attended a public meeting in Killorglin voicing concern on plans to move residents out.

In a statement to The Kerryman on Tuesday, the HSE outlined its wish to assure families that 'no decision has been made to close the centre'. And, it said, no such decision would be made in the 'foreseeable' future.

The statement comes just weeks after the HSE first officially broke its silence on the matter amid an outpouring of concern from families fearful the relocation moves would have a catastrophic effect on their loved ones. That earlier statement did nothing to alleviate their fears however, as it broadly indicated the decongregation would proceed as planned under the HSE national policy.

In the statement released this week, Chief Officer for the HSE Community Health Organisation for Cork and Kerry Ger Reaney said that changes to living arrangements will only happen 'where appropriate' and only by agreement of residents and families.

He said that some residents would benefit from what he described as 'greater opportunities to participate in local

communities' before moving in time into the community; but that for others the move would be more difficult - 'at this stage'. "Some residents at St Mary's of the Angels would definitely benefit from greater opportunities to participate in local communities. Some of those residents will then, over time and with proper planning, move to living in the community and find that very positive. On the other hand, for some individuals, moving to live in the community at this stage would be more difficult," Mr Reaney said.

Mr Reaney is to now meet with representatives of the SMOA Parents and Relatives' Association to 'ensure their concerns are heard'.

Kerryman