



# No more cutbacks in the frontline of health service

THE state of the health services is never far from the headlines, but this week has been an eye-opener. Doctors, politicians and locals held a press conference in Mallow to highlight curtailed services at the town's hospital.

All week, the *Evening Echo* has highlighted the urgent need to improve services for cystic fibrosis sufferers — average life expectancy for CF patients here is 10 years less than in Northern Ireland.

## WE SAY

### The Echo's viewpoint

Nationally, there have been more revelations about cleanliness in hospitals, cancer misdiagnosis and access to important services like speech therapy. The list goes on. It's like a throwback to the bad days of the eighties, when constant cutbacks were the order of the day. We have had a decade or more of prosperity and boom, but what have we done with it? Many have new cars and several holidays a year — but as soon as anyone comes into contact with our health service, it becomes clear that we still have a long way to go to become a truly prosperous nation. All the indications are that the

months ahead will be tougher economically. If we couldn't sort out access to health care when the country was awash with cash, then what's going to happen when belts are tightened?

No matter what, there must be no more budget-trimming in the health service, at least not when it comes to front-line services. Fine Gael suggested saving €50million a year by doing away with state think-tanks. If money is to be saved, it must be with these kind of initiatives, not through restricting the numbers of doctors or nurses.