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Hospital pledges €150k for suicide crisis centre set-up

by Eoin English

A hospital has pledged €150,000 to help establish a new suicide crisis centre in Cork.

The donation from the Bon Secours Hospital will be used to fully fit out Pieta House's new centre which is due to open on the Model Farm Rd in September.

A tender process for the works is under way and the fit-out will begin next month — managed by Wilson Architecture, based on Lapps Quay in the city.

Pieta House founder and chief executive, psychologist **Joan Freeman**, has confirmed she plans to move to Cork to oversee the rollout of her organisation's services across the southern region.

"Pieta House helped over 3,000 people last year and demand for our service continues to grow year on year," Ms Freeman said.

"We've been conscious for some time that without a presence in the southern region it would be difficult for us to meet this increasing demand.

"I'm delighted to say that with extremely generous financial assistance from Bon Secours, Cork we will be able to open a new centre in Cork this September.

"This important development brings us one step closer to our long-term goal of having a Pieta House centre within 100km of ev-

eryone in Ireland."

Its first suicide and self-harm crisis centre opened in Lucan, Co Dublin, in Jan 2006.

Since then, three more centres have opened in Dublin and one each in Limerick and Roscrea.

The Cork centre is one of three Pieta House centres due to open before the end of the year — the others will be in Tuam and Castleisland.

Harry Canning, the hospital manager of the Bon Secours in Cork, said the Bon Secours Sisters have a long history of supporting charitable endeavours in their local communities.

"Sr Maria Cuffe, mission co-ordinator for Bon Secours Health System, has been instrumental in promoting this support for Pieta House," he said.

"We are delighted that the opening of this centre will provide a much needed professional support structure for people who may be contemplating suicide."

Pieta House provides a professional, face-to-face, free-of-charge therapeutic service for people in acute stages of distress. Its aim is to reduce suicide by helping people get through that critical phase when suicide becomes a plan rather than just an idea. It has seen and helped over 8,000 people since its establishment.

● www.pieta.ie