



Issue 38 | November 2020

# CoMH eNEWS

College of Medicine and Health, UCC



University College Cork, Ireland  
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

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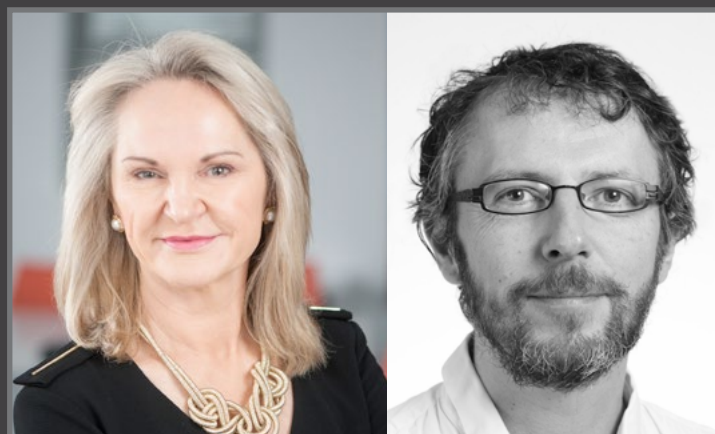
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Award



Mouth Cancer



For info and submissions email: [headofcollege-comh@ucc.ie](mailto:headofcollege-comh@ucc.ie)

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Dear Alumni,

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our daily lives, our College's commitment to future healthcare professionals and communities has never been more important. Our close partnerships with our health services, academic colleagues and industry partners are imperative to support COVID-19 research, the care of patients and the safety of clinical students. We are privileged at CoMH to have such a dedicated staff who continue to strive forward during this challenging time to deliver excellence in education, research and innovation.

Maintaining clinical placements for our students is one of our highest priorities. Dr Michael Byrne, Head of the Student Health Department, has successfully led the College's development of a 'Symptom Tracker App and Follow Up System' to protect our clinical students, patients, clients and the clinical settings in which they are placed to train. For our COVID-19 researchers, a BSL3

lab is of vital importance for UCC to study how the virus engages with the immune system. The College with the support of the university is putting plans in place to develop a protected research environment that operates at Biosafety Level 3 (BSL3).

CoMH is developing training programmes to facilitate healthcare professionals in the era of COVID-19. And, I'd like to take this opportunity to commend the work of Dr Maura Smiddy, School of Public Health, who is leading a multidisciplinary team based in the School of Public Health (SPH), the School of Microbiology and Cork University Business School to deliver a new 'Postgraduate Certificate in Infection Prevention and Control' to support the private nursing home sector. Welcomed by Minister of Health, Stephen Donnelly and funded through Skillnet Ireland, this programme comes at a critical time for the private healthcare sector.

Our strong links with industry continue to build on the University's standing as Ireland's leading university for industry engagement. I am extremely proud that €8.7m has been awarded under the Irish Government's Human Capital Initiative 3 (HCI 3) Pillar funding to a project collaboration between CoMH UCC, CIT and nine of our industry partners, including Boston Scientific, Sanmina, Janssen and Stryker. Led by Dr Mark Tangney and myself,

our consortium have developed the 'iEd Hub', in line with the European Commission's Skills for Industry Strategy 2030. This funding is a major boost for Cork's pharma and health tech future and will help graduates prepare for and find work in the Health & Life Sciences industry sector. In addition to this project, the Health Innovation Hub Ireland (HIHI) at CoMH ran successful initiatives over the last period across the health sector with Irish businesses to creatively solve problems and improve patient care.

Outside of our response to COVID-19; you will see from this edition that our research centres and staff continue to excel in their chosen fields. The INFANT research centre led by Dr Keelin O'Donoghue are working collaboratively on an innovative Health Research Board funded project. The RE:CURRENT project aims to evaluate the services provided for those who experience recurrent miscarriage (RM) in the Republic of Ireland. At present, there is no national standard for the provision of services and supports to those who experience RM.

Dr Fergus Shanahan, Prof Emeritus at UCC, has published a highly original book "The Language of Illness" in which he looks at memoirs of illness, and outlines the lessons we can learn from a better understanding of the words we use to describe illness. It is a book for all those who care

about caring. Dr John F. Cryan, Dept Anatomy and Neuroscience UCC, has joined the Editorial Advisory Board of the long-standing reputable journal Trends in Neuroscience. I'd like to congratulate Dr Richeal Ni Riordain, Consultant/Senior Lecturer in Oral Medicine in the UCC Dental School, who was recognised on 5th October with the prestigious ADEE (Association of Dental Education in Europe) Excellence in Dental Education Early Career Award. This award is in recognition of Richeal's ongoing commitment to dental education and evolving career.

Finally, I'm very proud that two schools in CoMH have earned Athena SWAN awards. **Congratulations to UCC Nursing & Midwifery and Dental Schools awarded for their equality work.** This announcement follows news earlier this year of the conferring of an award on the School of Public Health, bringing to eight the number of School-level awards in UCC.

Until the next edition of this newsletter, stay safe.

**Professor Helen Whelton**

Head of College of Medicine and Health  
University College Cork

# CoMH's Professor Helen Whelton and Dr Mark Tangney lead iED Hub project

Boost for Cork's pharma and health tech future as major educational funding announced

Pharmaceutical and medical goods account for 31% of Ireland's total exports and the Cork region is Ireland's largest Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) cluster in this sector. All of the top 10 global pharmaceutical companies have operations in Ireland, with over 30,000 people directly employed in this sector.

€8.7 million of funding has been awarded to UCC, CIT and nine industry partners to develop the next generation of graduates for the Health & Life Sciences industry sector.

UCC, CIT and industry partners came together to develop the 'iEd Hub' which will produce a new generation of graduates, in line with the European Commission's Skills for Industry Strategy 2030. The iED Hub project is being led by Professor Helen

Whelton, Head of the College of Medicine and Health at UCC and Dr Mark Tangney a senior researcher in the College.

The iEd Hub will result in deepening of relationships with local enterprise partners in education, R&D and new company formation, benefiting the local economy. Funding was awarded to the iED Hub initiative under the Irish Government's Human Capital Initiative 3 (HCI 3) Pillar funding.

"This is a clear example of two educational partners in Cork working together with industry to secure our future" commented Professor John O'Halloran, Interim President, UCC. "Our economy faces significant challenges but at UCC we are working to ensure it is supported across all sectors."



**Above (l-r):** Professor Helen Whelton, Head of the College of Medicine and Health and Dr Mark Tangney, Principal Investigator at Cancer Research@UCC

In total UCC was awarded €14.4 million in HCI 3 funding, which is funding that is designed to meet priority skills needs across Ireland's economy. UCC is Ireland's leading university for industry engagement and our success in this funding is recognition of our knowledge of the type of graduate and skills that are required across industry sectors" commented Professor O'Halloran.

## INDUSTRY PARTNERS

CIT	Pfizer
Boston Scientific	SOSV
Sanmina	DPS Group Global
Janssen Ireland	Laya Health care
Stryker	Vodafone



# Winners of HHI's Spark Ignite Innovation Competition Announced

Health Innovation Hub Ireland (HHI) collaborated with the Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD) and National Doctors Training and Planning (NDTP) to run the Spark Ignite Programme 2020. This is the only staff facing innovation competition open to all 115,000+ HSE staff across all disciplines and departments. The overarching goal is to help staff who have identified solutions to problems, challenges or unmet needs by validating that need and determine if a market exists for their proposed solution, product or service. It provides a unique opportunity for HSE staff, to engage with the commercial and industrial experience of the HHI team and ignite the in-depth knowledge and confidence of HSE staff to promote their ideas.

Over 150 applications with innovative ideas in healthcare were received from HSE staff nationwide and 36 finalists were chosen to go forward to a bespoke innovation workshop, supported by the Local Enterprise Office Galway. The 12 finalists in each region pitched to a panel of experienced judges to win funding for the development or implementation of their idea. The best single applicant overall and best team applicant overall from each region qualified for the National Final.



**Pictured left (l-r):**  
Marie Ronan and Rose Cafferkey, Antimicrobial Stewardship Pharmacists, Mayo University Hospital (Photo taken in 2019)

## HHI Spark Ignite National Winner 2020

**Marie Ronan and Rose Cafferkey, Antimicrobial Stewardship Pharmacists, Mayo University Hospital**

**IDEA:** Our innovation is a smart tool capable of the real time audit, monitoring and surveillance of antibiotics and will have a significant impact in the fight against antimicrobial resistance and benefit not only patients in Mayo University Hospital but patients nationally and internationally.

Speaking on winning: “Rose and I are delighted and proud to win this prestigious award for the Antimicrobial Stewardship Team and Pharmacy Department in Mayo University Hospital. Being shortlisted for the HHI Spark Ignite Award was an honour especially with the high calibre of entrants.

The training workshops provided by Health Innovation Hub Ireland were an excellent learning experience and will benefit us long into our careers. We would strongly encourage anyone with an innovative idea to enter this competition. Antimicrobial resistance affects us all and has the potential to have a devastating impact on all our lives.”

Dr Colman Casey, National Director Health Innovation Hub Ireland, said “HHI is delighted to be a partner with NDTP and ONMSD in the 2020 Spark Ignite Programme. The programme was conducted remotely for 2020 and consisted of regional finals, culminating in a national final. The number and quality of innovative ideas emanating from within the healthcare community is very impressive in these very challenging times.” Read more [HERE](#).

# 15 early stage start-ups and SMEs named Health Innovation Hub Ireland's Health Innovations 2020

The 2020 winners of Health Innovation Hub Ireland's call for innovative ideas from companies, start-ups and SMEs has been announced. Health Innovation Hub Ireland's national call for innovative ideas is directed at companies who have an innovative product, solution or service that are at pre-commercial or late development phase with the potential to significantly impact Irish healthcare.

The call is particularly relevant this year as the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for innovation in healthcare. In addition, based on HSE input, HIHI also launched a focussed call for the prevention, early diagnosis and self-management of chronic illness including cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease and diabetes. This year there has been a marked surge in companies developing health solutions that reflect global health trends and a particular focus on digital and tele health solutions is emerging.

48 cutting edge innovators competed for the opportunity to avail of the unique HIHI innovation pathway for companies seeking pilot or validation studies. 23 made it through to our dragon's den style pitch panels which included experts from HSE, Enterprise Ireland, HRB, SFI, CRCI, Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Department of Health, clinicians, and industry.

There were 15 ultimate winners with strong competition amongst this year's entries, 5 of these winners address the theme of the focussed call- 'supporting self-management of chronic illness'. Many of these



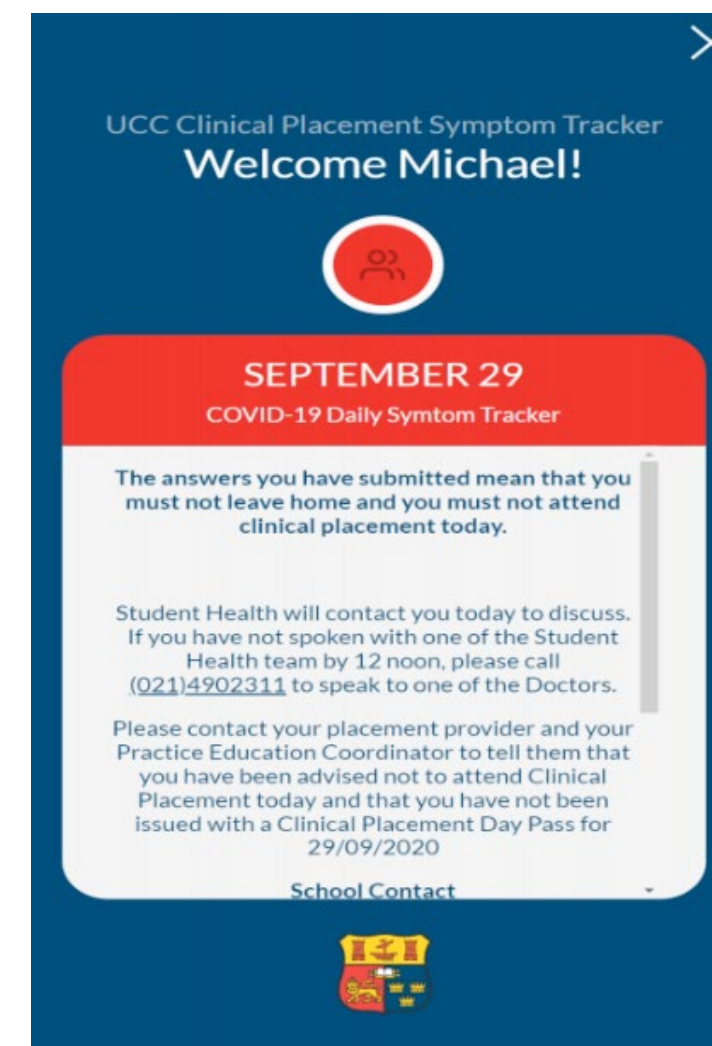
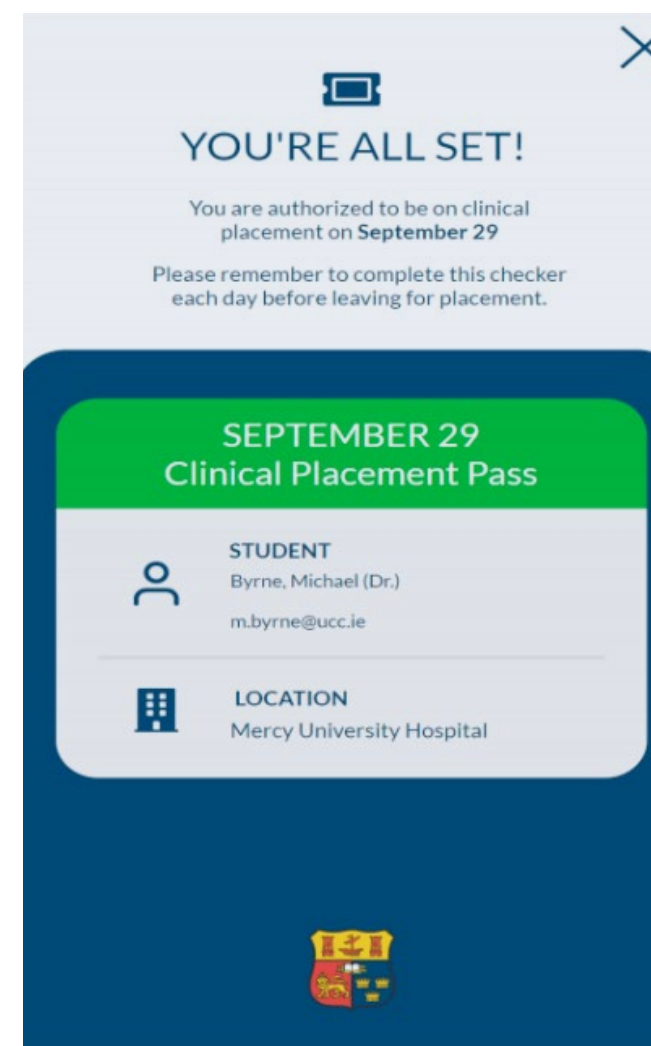
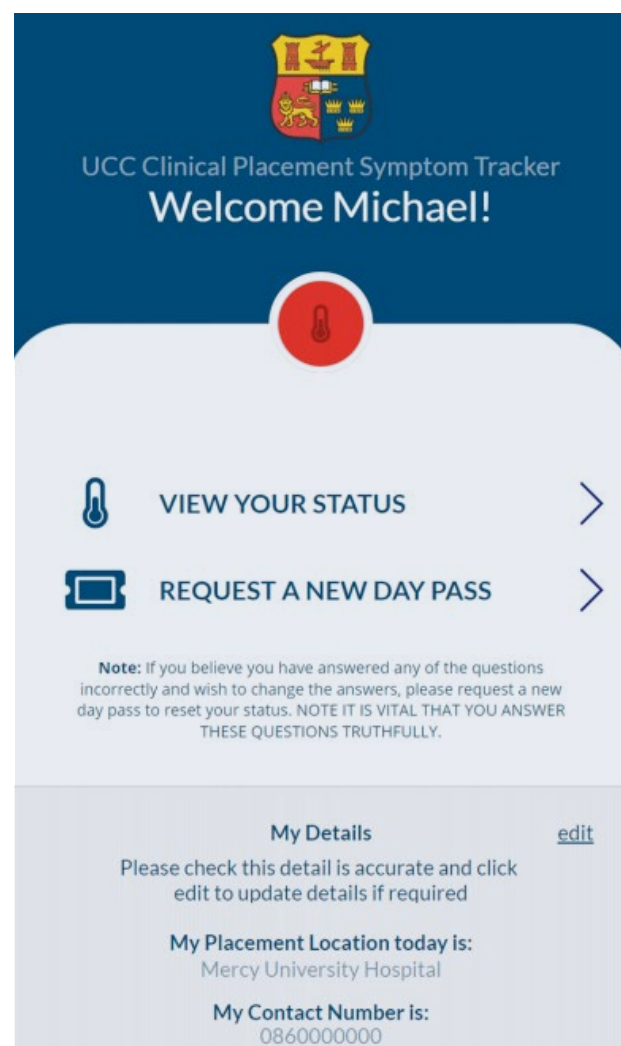
solutions leverage technology to enable care in the community, which (in the current pandemic) is now a necessity. Acting as a broker the HIHI matches companies with relevant clinical teams, oversees a study of each product in an Irish clinical setting, and delivers an outcome report which going forward, supports the adoption of products in national and international markets, enhances distribution opportunities and assists in the continued development for those companies.

See full list of HIHI 2020 Health Innovators and read more [HERE](#).



# UCC Clinical Placement COVID Tracker App

Right (l-r): Home Screen,  
i) Day-pass Issued or  
ii) Day-pass Not Issued



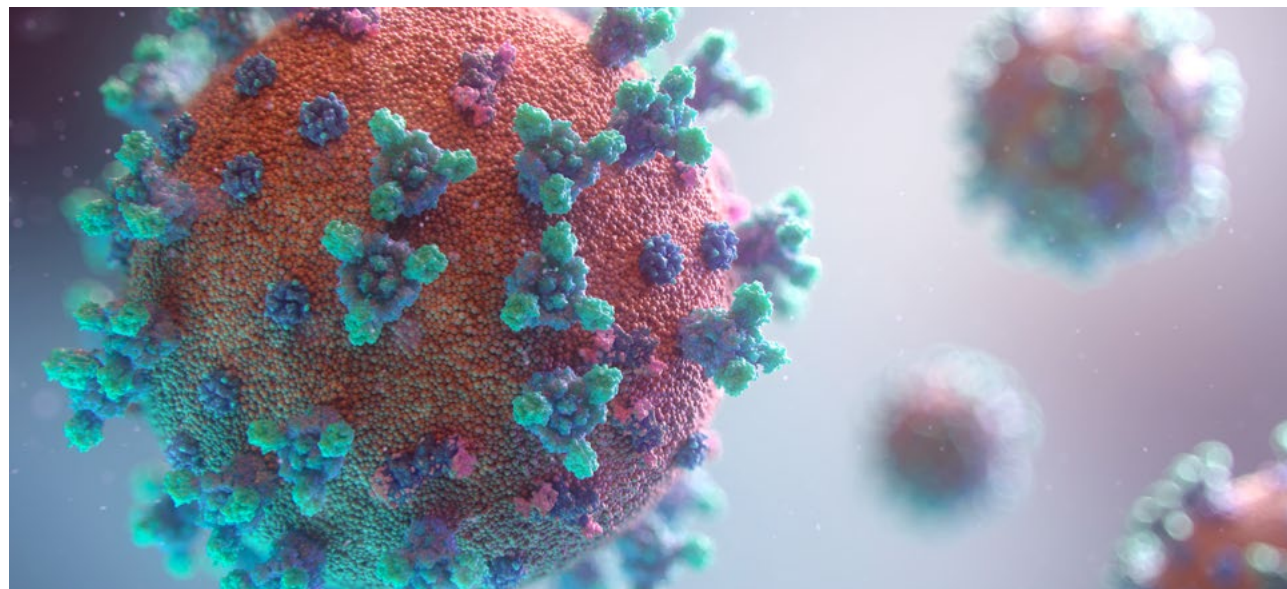
Our IT Services and Student Health Department have collaborated with colleagues in the College to deliver an IT solution to protect its clinical students, patients, clients and the clinical settings in which they are placed to train.

The team successfully developed and implemented an App that allows all students on clinical placement on a daily basis to self-declare if they have symptoms of COVID-19, if they may be or are, an infectious risk through contact with COVID-19, and according to that declaration be either issued or not issued with a Day-Pass to allow them to attend on clinical placement that day.

They have implemented an end to end closed loop communication and care follow-up system for the student. This to ensure that the student is supported to act appropriately, remain off placement, go into self-isolation if required, and receive urgent attention from Student Health and the School/Placement setting notified of the students discovered to have COVID-19.

The App provides a means of tracking and reporting the rates of compliance with the requirement to complete the app by the students so as to be able to provide evidence to the HSE that all steps are being taken to reduce the risk to the student and the placement setting.





## Covid-19 Research Alumni Appeal for UCC BSL3 Lab

Our researchers continue to be extremely active in the race to understand and mitigate Covid-19. To study COVID-19 and how the virus engages with the immune system, a protected research environment that operates at Biosafety Level 3 (BSL3) is of vital importance for UCC.

*BSL3 is a high specification sealed laboratory with a specific negative air-pressure circulation system that importantly protects the outside environment from contamination with research materials.*

Earlier this year, CoMH in collaboration with David Williams, Director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving and the UCC Alumni team circulated an appeal to alumni for COVID-19 funding. The **COVID-19 response appeal**, sought support both for the construction of the laboratory and the next generation of researchers across all disciplines who will be at the forefront of studying the virus and its impact on society.

The appeal has brought in €7,750 which is a very positive outcome for this type of appeal. This funding will be allocated in part to support the development of a Biosafety Level 3 (BSL3) lab.



## Dr John F. Cryan joins Editorial Advisory Board of Trends in Neuroscience Journal

Dr John F. Cryan, Professor and Chair, Dept Anatomy and Neuroscience UCC, has joined the editorial advisory board of the journal *Trends in Neuroscience*. The reputable journal is published monthly and dates back to 1978. Dr Cryan, who is also a Principal Investigator in the APC Microbiome Institute, joins the likes of Dr Silvia Arber of the University of Basel, Switzerland, Dr Xu Zhang of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, China, Dr Maiken Nedergaard of the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, and more. More on the journal can be found [HERE](#).

**Above:** Dr John F. Cryan, Professor and Chair, Dept Anatomy and Neuroscience UCC



## APC's Professor Fergus Shanahan launches new book 'The Language of Illness'

New book tackles insufficiencies of language in tackling suffering of illness



**Above:** Professor Fergus Shanahan, APC and Professor Paula O'Leary, Head of School of Medicine UCC

In this highly original book, Dr Fergus Shanahan, Emeritus Professor of Medicine at University College Cork and founding Director of APC Microbiome Ireland SFI Research Centre at UCC, an eminent gastroenterologist who has practised in Ireland, the United States and Canada, and published widely around the world, outlines the lessons we can learn from a better understanding of the words we use to describe illness.

Inspired by APC's hugely successful 'The Experience of Illness' symposium with associated 'Living/Loss; the Experience of Illness in Art' exhibition at the Glucksman Gallery and over 40 year's medical experience, Shanahan looks at the portrayal of illness in literature and proposes practical ways in which we can dismantle the language barriers which have been built up in regard to illness.

"Illness is described in a language which differs from the language of doctors. The language of illness is simple and honest; it's time to consider the language we use to reflect the personal nature of illness" says Dr Fergus Shanahan, author of *The Language of Illness*, launched on September 17th. This is a most timely discussion of illness, as the world grapples with the Covid pandemic and its aftermath.

Like the great American poet-doctor William Carlos Williams, Professor Shanahan aims to help us develop a new language – to help us live with illness, which is as much a part of the human condition as being born. *The Language of Illness* is a deeply humane and moving book which, as the author puts it himself, is written for "all those who care about caring".

*The Language of Illness* is published in Ireland by **Liberties Press** where it is available to purchase online ([www.libertiespress.com/shop/the-language-of-illness](http://www.libertiespress.com/shop/the-language-of-illness)). The World French-language rights have been acquired by Éditions Les Arènes, Paris.

APC Microbiome Ireland was delighted to host a virtual launch of this book, via Microsoft Teams, on Thursday, September 17th. A recording of the event can be viewed via YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/6UilktxKLVc>



# INFANT Working Collaboratively to Evaluate Recurrent Miscarriage Services

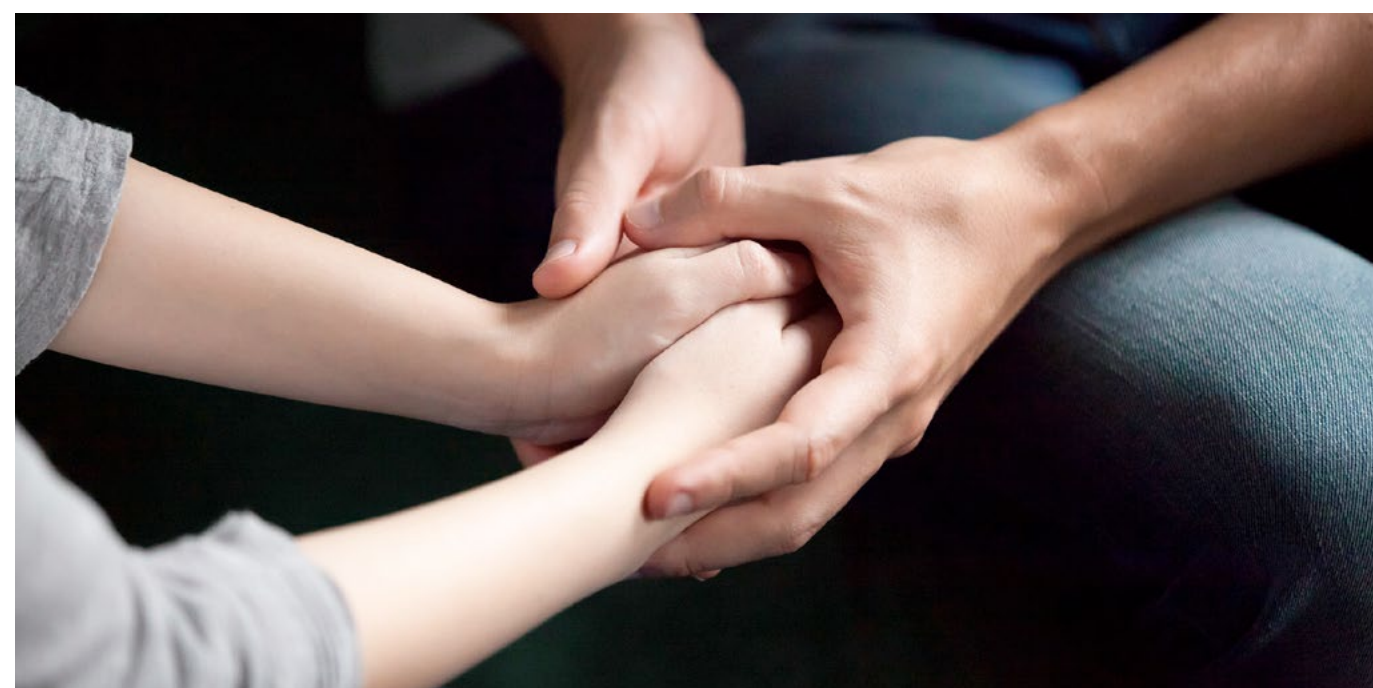
The RE:CURRENT project funded by the HRB



Miscarriage is a public health issue that affects women all around the world. One in four women will experience a first-trimester miscarriage in their reproductive life, while at least 1-6% will experience at least two or more consecutive first-trimester miscarriages, commonly defined as recurrent miscarriage (RM). At present, there is no national standard for the provision of services and supports to those who experience RM.

Led by Dr Keelin O'Donoghue, the RE:CURRENT (Recurrent miscarriage: Evaluating CURRENT services) project, funded by the Health Research Board (HRB) aims to evaluate the services provided for those who experience RM in the Republic of Ireland. Seven inter-related studies are being conducted over a two-year period. These include a systematic review of clinical practice guidelines for RM care in high-income countries, and the development of guideline-based key performance indicators. The latter will be used in a subsequent audit of services within the 19 maternity hospitals/units in the Republic of Ireland, as well as a cohort study of the management and outcomes of women with RM within the South/South West Hospital Group. The team is also undertaking a national survey to examine the experience of people who have interacted with the maternity services following RM and qualitative studies to evaluate the experiences of relevant stakeholders who provide, manage, or engage with RM services. Finally, a health economic analysis is being undertaken to assess costs associated with RM service provision and public preferences for resource allocation for RM services.

The RE:CURRENT Project Management Group comprises Dr Keelin O'Donoghue (PI), Dr Sarah Meaney (Co-Applicant), and Dr Rebecca Dennehy and Marita Hennessy PhD (Postdoctoral Researchers). This Group is working collaboratively with a Steering Group and a Research Advisory Group, which include key stakeholders comprising: healthcare and allied health professionals, representatives from advocacy and support organisations, those involved in the administration, governance and management of maternity services, academics, and women and men who have experienced RM. Such collaborative working is integral to the project, and ultimately in assisting efforts to standardise and optimise the quality of RM services across the country.





# New collaborative PG Cert in Infection Prevention and Control in the School of Public Health

Infection Prevention and Control is the cornerstone of providing a safe environment for patients and residents in healthcare settings. Traditionally this speciality focussed on implementing standardised evidence-based practices and procedures to reduce the risk of transmission of, or occurrence of, infectious conditions and infections. As a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic infection prevention has now infiltrated institutes of education, workplaces, communities and homes. The pandemic has also demonstrated the fundamental need for healthcare professionals to be knowledgeable in infection prevention and control theory and application.

Last June a multidisciplinary team based in the School of Public Health (SPH), the School of Microbiology and Cork University Business School responded to a Leading Healthcare Providers Skillnet Ireland, tender funded by, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. The requirement of the tender was to develop and facilitate, an Infection Prevention and Control postgraduate course that would be specifically aimed at the private Nursing Home sector. The team, led by Dr Maura Smiddy, School of Public Health, were delighted to be awarded the opportunity to facilitate such a programme in July. Dr Smiddy and her

UCC collaborators Dr David Clarke, School of Microbiology and Dr Ciara Heavin, Cork University Business School, submitted the required paperwork to the College Academic Board and underwent the Programme Approval process with full approval in August. This successful whirlwind tour of approval processes and procedures within UCC would not have been possible without the amazing support of staff disseminated throughout the university including, Ivan Perry (SPH), Mags Arnold, College of Medicine and Health (CoMH), Kathryn Neville (CoMH), Aine Foley (CoMH), Aine Flynn and her team, Graduate Studies Office, Mary Martin and her team in the Fees Office, Eleanor Fouhy and Yvonne Clune in the office of Academic Programmes and Regulations and many more.

Carmel Kelly, Network Manager, Leading Healthcare Providers Skillnet and her team, led on applicant screening and approval which supported the recruitment of a cohort of 47 students, all working in private nursing home settings. Applicants are from twenty counties and represent all provinces in Ireland.

The aim of the course is to equip graduates with the knowledge to support them in the coordination and management of infection prevention and control services in the clinical

setting. To facilitate busy professionals working with current social distancing restrictions the course is completely online. The programme commenced on the 28th of September and already students have created a highly interactive vibrant community of professionals. Students will complete specialist modules in infection prevention and control, microbiology, quality and safety and management and leadership. This programme will support students to implement infection prevention and control in their respective organisations, moving forward at a challenging time.







## Mouth Cancer Awareness Day: No Teeth? - No Excuse!

Mouth Cancer Awareness Day (MCAD) took place on Wednesday 16th September this year and is supported by the main dental health organisations, the Irish Cancer Society and the National Cancer Control programme.

This year the Mouth Cancer Awareness campaign is advising the older population and their carers to be particularly mindful of the early signs of mouth cancer and to seek advice and treatment from their dentist or doctor.

Over **700** cases of mouth, head and neck cancer are diagnosed every year in Ireland, and this figure has been steadily increasing in recent years.

While Mouth, Head & Neck Cancer can occur at any age, the majority of mouth cancers are diagnosed in the **over 55's**, whether or not they still have their own natural teeth or wear dentures.

The number of people diagnosed with mouth, head and neck cancer is set to **increase by up to 30%** in the next **25 years**.

### Treatment

If detected early, treatment for mouth cancer can be more straightforward and have an excellent outcome. Unfortunately for those who are diagnosed at a late stage, the outcomes can be poor and affected individuals can be left with life altering changes to their appearance and their ability to speak, eat and swallow.

### Signs of Mouth Cancer

- ulcer,
- white or red patches inside the mouth,
- a lump in the mouth or neck,
- or a persistent sore throat or hoarseness.

If people have any of these symptoms for more than three weeks, they should contact their dentist or doctor.

Dr Eleanor O'Sullivan, Cork University Dental School said, "We can turn the tide on this disease by avoiding known risk factors (smoking, alcohol, HPV), knowing the warning signs and encouraging people to be mouth aware and to

seek help from their dentist or GP if they have any ulcers or other lesions that do not heal in 3 weeks. Survival and quality of life are greatly improved when these cancers are diagnosed early and treated quickly."

If anyone is worried or affected by any aspect of mouth head and neck cancer, they can talk to a cancer nurse on the Irish Cancer Society's Cancer Support Line, Freephone 1800 200 700 or go to **www.cancer.ie**

To find out more visit the new information website: **www.mouthcancer.ie**







**Above:** Singer-songwriter Brian Kennedy

Down Syndrome Cork has teamed up with University College Cork, Music4Children and singer songwriter Brian Kennedy to release a heart-warming video to coincide with International Friendship Day. The video features the original song 'Best Friend' performed by singer songwriter Brian Kennedy and performances from children with Down Syndrome and their siblings.

Directed by Conor Slattery and produced by Dr Eva McMullan (Music4Children and UCC) in association with Dr Pauline Frizelle (Lecturer, School of Clinical Therapies), Down Syndrome Cork with the kindness of Brian Kennedy (performer and songwriter), the video was created to raise awareness of the vulnerability of people with Down Syndrome to COVID-19 and to encourage members of the public to remember people with additional needs during the pandemic.

The video also emphasises the importance of Lámh signs to children with Down Syndrome. Dr Pauline Frizelle demonstrated several Lámh signs, accompanied by the children.

## Lecturer from the School of Clinical Therapies collaborates on video to raise awareness of people with Down Syndrome amid COVID-19

Lámh is the manual sign system used by children and adults with intellectual disability and communication needs in Ireland. Dr Frizelle stated, "It was a pleasure to be involved in this project – it was a great initiative by Dr Eva McMullan to raise awareness of people with intellectual disability during this Covid pandemic. Lámh is such an important method of communication to help build friendships and include all people in society."

Dr McMullan is currently working on a collaborative and interdisciplinary research project with Down Syndrome Cork, Dr Yvonne Nolan, Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience and Dr Jason Chan and Dr Annalisa Setti, School of Applied Psychology. Funded by the College of Medicine and Health at UCC, the project is exploring the benefits of Music on the neurobiological development of children with Down syndrome. The project Dr McMullan states, is about celebrating ability and the importance of music engagement in the development of all children.

The video is available to watch [HERE](#).



## ADEE Excellence in Dental Education Award (Early Career) Awarded to Dental School's Dr Richeal ni Riordain

**Left:** Dr Richeal ni Riordain, UCC Dental School

Congratulations to Dr Richeal Ni Riordain who was recognised on 5th October with the prestigious ADEE (Association of Dental Education in Europe) Excellence in Dental Education Early Career Award. This award is in recognition of Richeal's ongoing commitment to dental education and evolving career.

Richeal is a Consultant/Senior Lecturer in Oral Medicine in the UCC Dental School, Honorary Associate Professor of Oral Medicine in University College London Eastman Dental Institute United Kingdom and Health Education England's Regional Academic and Research Advisor for London United Kingdom. Qualified in Medicine and Dentistry, she has worked as a clinician and an educator in both fields. She teaches Oral Medicine and Clinical Medical Sciences in Dentistry and supervises doctoral students in both Cork and London. Richeal holds a Masters of Arts in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education with research interests focusing on Universal Design for Learning, interdisciplinary teaching and assessment.



## Dental Hospital back to business having pitched in for the national COVID-19 effort

Cork University Dental School & Hospital has started to resume routine dental care services for patients.

The Dental School and Hospital, amalgamated its clinics in March to one clinical area to provide a limited dental emergency service so that it could free up space for the HSE to relocate a number of CUH outpatient services during the COVID-19 crisis.

Dr Christine McCreary Dean, Cork University Dental School & Hospital today said: "While emergency dental care continued, we look forward to

welcoming all our dental patients back. Our focus is on prioritising each patient's care according to their clinical needs and we ask people to please bear with us over the coming weeks".

The Dental Hospital continues to run a dental emergency service and patients will access this via a dedicated phone line as the hospital can no longer accept walk-in patients under its new COVID-19 safety protocol.

**Above:** Head of the Dental School Dr Christine McCreary (centre back) pictured with members of the Dental Hospital team





## UCC School of Nursing and Midwifery welcomes Nursing Home Report

The School of Nursing and Midwifery has welcomed the comprehensive nature of the Nursing Homes Expert Panel report, issued on 19 August, and how it gives credit to frontline care home nurses, health care assistants, catering and cleaning staff and care home managers who demonstrated exceptional resilience and commitment to provide care to their residents and families.

The **report** provides an insightful overview of how complex funding arrangements

combined with a lack of clinical governance, tenuous links with the HSE, outdated quality standards and lack of transparency in staffing and training has left Irish nursing homes under-prepared to manage the crisis created by COVID-19.

However, the School has also outlined that work still needs to be done on the fundamental issues that face the Nursing Home sector in Ireland. Professor Corina Naughton from the School of Nursing and

Midwifery, concluded, that there is a risk that this very welcome report is seen as a short-term response to COVID-19. It is imperative that there is the political will and economic resources to drive reform and deliver a new integrated community and nursing home care model for the 21st century. Read more **HERE**.



## School of Nursing Celebrations



### (i) UCC's BSc Nursing and Midwifery Students celebrate the completion of their programme

The BSc Nursing and BSc Midwifery Year 4 interns marked the completion of their programmes symbolically on the 17th and 18th September by submitting their year 4 competency booklets marking the completion of their programme and receiving a copy of a book which catalogues the 25 year history of the School of Nursing and Midwifery, UCC.

The 2016-2020 BSc students marked history in their own right by being the nursing and

midwifery students who were on clinical placement from January 2020 to September 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic reached the Republic of Ireland in February 2020; at that time there was huge uncertainty and anxiety. Yet these year four intern students turned up for work day after day, donned PPE and cared for their patients. These students are some of the unsung heroes of the Covid-19 pandemic. The staff of UCC's School of Nursing and Midwifery and the staff of the affiliated clinical services are extremely proud of these students and have remarked repeatedly on the positive contribution these students have made. In a

few weeks these students will be working as registered nurses and midwives within the health services having secured permanent contracts which is fantastic.

COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of nurses and midwives as core front line workers and reinforced the WHO decision to make 2020 the international year of the nurse and midwife. Nurses and midwives often forget how much of an impact they make on a person's life. The School of Nursing and Midwifery, UCC wants to say thank you to all the nurses and midwives who truly make a difference.





**Above:** Year Four Mental Health Student Nurses pictured with Mr Johnny Goodwin, Programme Lead, Professor Josephine Hegarty, Head of School and Dr Teresa Wills, Director of undergraduate Education, at the Blessing of the Hands Ceremony

Photos: Tony Archer



**Above:** Year Four Mental Health Nursing Student Chloe Doyle accepts the Niall O'Mahony Perpetual Award at the ceremony

## (ii) Blessing of the Hands Ceremony celebrates Year 4 Mental Health Nursing students

Year four mental Health Student Nurses celebrated the completion of their BSc Nursing programme with a blessing of the Hands Ceremony at the Honan Chapel, UCC on the 10th September 2020.

The Blessing of the Hands is a great way to celebrate the completion of a nursing programme. Blessing of the hands recognises and unites healthcare workers who've chosen the shared journey of caring for patients/clients. The hands are a symbolic representation of both therapeutic touch and the actions involved in providing nursing care. This group of students worked as interns during the height of COVID-19 which was a huge challenge, it was a time of great anxiety and uncertainty. They are to be commended for their contribution during COVID-19 which was a very important part of the national health service response. The ceremony was organised by Anne Kelly, Norma Sexton, Marie-Therese Keating, and the mental health team.

Chloe Doyle (year four mental health nursing student) was awarded the Niall O'Mahony Perpetual Award at a ceremony in the Honan chapel on the 10th September 2020. Niall was a nurse tutor on the psychiatric nursing programme up to 2003 and the award was created in 2004 to honour Niall's memory and his contribution to the mental health services. All the class of 2020 were deemed worthy of achieving the award. Thus the judges had an extremely difficult task but chose Chloe as she exemplified all the characteristics of a caring and compassionate nurse and future nurse leader.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2020!**



# CoMH Upcoming Autumn Conferings 2020



**Above:** Professor Helen Whelton, Head of the College of Medicine and Health at recordings in Devere Hall, UCC.

The College of Medicine and Health Autumn conferings will be broadcast virtually with an accompanying congratulations wall on **Wednesday, 18th November at 3pm** on the UCC website.

Preparation for this ceremony is already underway at the University with Professor Helen Whelton, Head of the College of Medicine and Health, taking part in recordings in De Vere Hall this week.

CoMH would like to send all of our Graduands best wishes; we hope you enjoy the ceremony and we look forward to congratulating you on the day. For more information please visit the UCC Conferings webpage [HERE](#).

## List of CoMH Degrees being conferred Wednesday, 18th November 2020 @ 15.00

BDS (Hons)
BDS (Hons) (Graduate Entry)
BPharm (Hons)
MPharm
BSc (Hons) (Nursing Studies)
BSc (Hons) (Occupational Therapy)
BSc (Hons) (Paramedic Studies) - Practitioner Entry
BSc (Hons) (Public Health)
BSc (Hons) (Speech and Language Therapy)
MSc Cognitive Behavioural Psychotherapy
MSc (Medicine and Health)
MSc (Midwifery)
MSc (Nursing Studies)
MSc (Nursing)
MSc (Nursing) Advanced Nursing Practice
MSc (Nursing) Advanced Practice Nursing
MSc (Older Person Rehabilitation)
Master of Pharmacy
Doctor of Medicine
PhD (Medicine and Health)
PhD (Structured Population and Health Services Research Education)
BSc (Hons) Health Studies (General)
BSc (Hons) Health Studies - Children's and General (Integrated)
BSc Health Studies (Intellectual Disability)
BSc Health Studies (Women's Health)
BSc (Hons) (Midwifery)
BSc (Hons) Nursing (General)
BSc (Hons) Nursing (Intellectual Disability)
BSc (Hons) Nursing (Mental Health)
MSc (Audiology)
MSc (Dementia)
MSc (Diagnostic Radiography)
MSc (Human Anatomy)
MSc (Occupational Health)
MPH (Online)
MCh (Surgical Science)





**Above:** Staff at the UCC School of Nursing and Midwifery



**Above:** Staff at the UCC School of Dentistry

**Note:** Photographs featured in this article are file pictures taken before the introduction of social distancing guidelines

## Congratulations to UCC Nursing & Midwifery and Dental Schools awarded for equality work

Two Schools in the College of Medicine & Health have earned Athena SWAN awards.

The UK-based Higher Education agency AdvanceHE announced the conferring of the awards on the School of Nursing & Midwifery and the Dental School & Hospital. The announcement follows news earlier this year of the conferring of an award on the School of Public Health, bringing to eight the number of School-level awards in UCC.

Athena SWAN awards acknowledge efforts made to identify systemic gender inequality in academia. All Irish Higher Education Institutions are signatories to the Athena SWAN Charter principles, and UCC recently renewed its bronze accreditation, at institutional level. Interim President Professor John O'Halloran (Chair of UCC's Athena SWAN Steering Group) congratulated Dr Cristiane da Mata and Dr Aine Horgan, team leads in the Dental School & Hospital and School of Nursing & Midwifery, respectively:

"Athena SWAN is a critical part of our strategic vision for UCC, particularly

now as we confront the challenges of the global pandemic. Creating inclusive work and learning environments will be key to cultivating the talent and potential of our staff and students, so that we can rise to meet the challenges of this historic moment. I congratulate the Heads of Schools and their teams for their leadership and for their hard work and commitment, which has been recognised today in these awards."

The Schools of Nursing & Midwifery and the Dental School & Hospital are now implementing gender equality action plans, aimed at improving workplace practices to benefit everyone. The Schools were supported in developing their applications by the Athena SWAN team, who form part of UCC's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Unit.

Four further School-level applications are planned for the forthcoming submission round (November 2020) and applications from all UCC Schools are planned over the next 3 year, including 3 at Silver level. UCC plans to apply for Silver institutional accreditation in 2023.





**Above:** Dr Nicola Bessell, Dept of Speech and Hearing Sciences UCC



**Above:** Dr Alice Lee, Dept of Speech and Hearing Sciences UCC

## New Edition of Phonetics for Speech Pathology available now

The new, third, edition of this indispensable guide for speech pathology and therapy students is completely updated, applying the results of the most recent research into speech disorders. The book is a collaboration between Dr Nicola Bessell and Dr Alice Lee of the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences UCC, Dr Orla Lowry of Ulster University, Dr Joan Rahilly of Queen's University Belfast, and Dr Martin J. Ball of Bangor University.

*Phonetics for Speech Pathology* introduces normative aspects of phonetics and describes how these may go wrong in atypical speech, and the consequences when they do. The book deals with the three main areas of phonetics: articulatory, acoustic, and

auditory, this last being often neglected in phonetics textbooks. The chapters are copiously illustrated, with most diagrams and figures newly drawn for this edition.

Correct use of phonetic symbolizations and the importance of adequate transcription in the clinic are stressed, as is the use of instrumental analyses to augment impressionistic descriptions of speech. A range of modern instrumental techniques in speech analysis is covered, as are developments in hearing research including auditory processing disorder. The book concludes with an introduction to current models of speech production and perception.

Phonetics for Speech Pathology, 3rd ed. is available [HERE](#).



## The National Suicide Research Foundation raises awareness for World Suicide Prevention Day 2020

Observed on 10th September every year, **World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD)** provides the opportunity for people, across the globe, to raise awareness of suicide and suicide prevention.

The WSPD theme, 'Working together to prevent suicide' aims to highlight that preventing suicide requires the efforts of many. **'Step Closer'** is a short film that builds on this with empathy and compassion around the physical metaphor that 'every step closer can connect someone to life'.

Professor Ella Arensman, School of Public Health and National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF) gives us an insight into the work the National Suicide Research Foundation is undertaking on suicide, self-harm and suicide prevention.

### How many people die by suicide each year?

In Ireland more than 500 people take their lives each year and in addition more than 12,500 people present to hospital following self-harm.

Globally, every 40 seconds someone takes their life; that's almost 800,000 people a year around the world with over 75% of suicides occurring in low-and-middle-income countries. For each suicide approximately 135 people suffer intense grief or are otherwise affected, resulting in 108 million people annually being profoundly impacted by suicidal behaviours. For every suicide, an estimated 25 people make a suicide attempt and many more have serious thoughts of suicide.

### What research work is the NSRF undertaking?

The National Suicide Research Foundation is located in UCC and has been conducting research into suicide, self-harm and suicide prevention for over 25 years. In recent months the NSRF has been conducting research and intervention projects related to COVID-19 such as monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on self-harm but also the impact of COVID-19 on depression, anxiety and domestic violence.

One example of a H2020 project the NSRF is working on in conjunction with the School of Public Health is a mental health project that involves 17 partners in 14 different countries. This project will break new ground in mental health promotion at the workplace by combining the expertise of mental health, occupational health, work psychology, public health and implementation science researchers and practitioners.

From my perspective, and it is the view of many of my colleagues globally, working together with different disciplines is the way forward in improving suicide prevention.

### Webinar

The NSRF held a webinar on the 'Priorities for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention before, during and after COVID-19' on Sept 10th. The virtual conference was organised by Professor Ella Arensman, Ms Eileen Williamson and Dr Paul Corcoran.



**Above:** Professor Ella Arensman, NSRF and School of Public Health

Professor Diego De Leo was invited keynote speaker, who presented on: The impacts of COVID-19 on mental health and suicidal behaviour among older people.

Presentations can be accessed via the following links:

- (1) <https://tinyurl.com/y2sp7qvp>
- (2) <https://tinyurl.com/y4yhltk>

### UN's Sustainable Development Goal

The reduction of suicide mortality is of global imperative and forms part of the global commitment to the UN's Sustainable Development Goal of reducing, by one third, premature mortality from noncommunicable diseases through prevention and treatment, and the promotion of mental health and well-being. Research shows multi-level approaches to suicide prevention, incorporating multiple interventions, to be effective. Collaboration at all levels is required; between government and stakeholders, funding bodies and organisations, NGOs and those that they serve, healthcare professionals and their patients, and persons at risk and their family, friends and colleagues.

# Student Placements in CoMH

**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, placements have been a very serious challenge for our schools since March.** In the spring and summer of 2020, many placement blocks had to be postponed. Paired with widespread re-deployment of Health and Social Care Profession (HSCP) clinicians, from their primary work to other duties, such as Covid-testing and contact tracing; this sudden curtailment of placements has produced an *unprecedented situation in placement provision* for our Schools.

CoMH welcomes and are encouraged by recent communications from the HSE Chief Clinical Officer, Dr Colm Henry; stating that **all health care students should continue to have access to clinical placement sites.**

In this edition, we take an in-depth look at how the **School of Clinical Therapies** has innovated and found opportunity in crisis; as well as the **School of Pharmacy** sharing feedback from a student's industry placement experience.

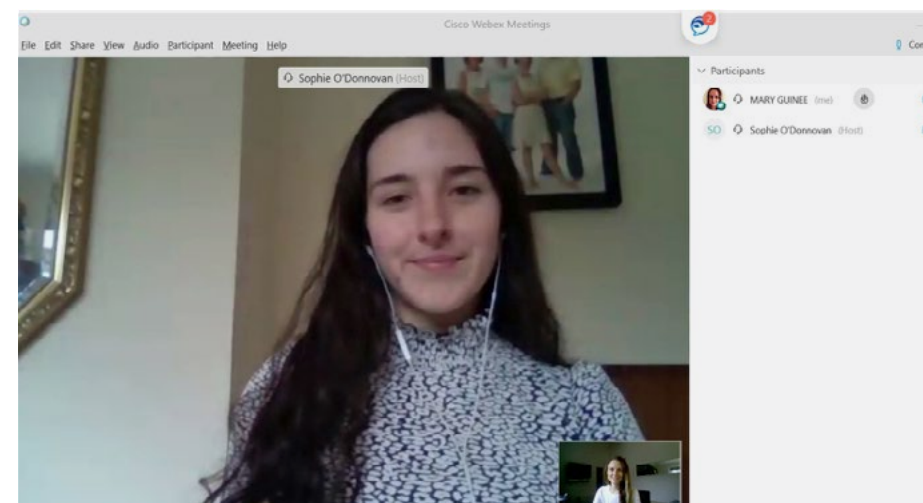


**Pictured left:** SLT student Molly Goulding, conducting a telehealth speech and language therapy session from the Brookfield SLT Clinic, with her Practice Tutor supervising remotely from a separate location

## TELEHEALTH OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SCHOOL OF CLINICAL THERAPIES

A crisis also presents opportunities to innovate and rethink models of placement and service delivery, and the Practice Education teams in the School of Clinical Therapies's various disciplines are working very hard with their clinical partners to find creative solutions.

**One example is the introduction of telehealth:** This mode of delivery is new to many services in Ireland, and it is an area where service providers and education providers are learning together. There is, fortunately, a solid evidence base, from which the School has drawn upon from other countries (such as Australia, Canada, and the USA), and which CoMH can use to customize services for the Irish context and develop robust procedures for service delivery and clinical learning.



**Left:** Sophie O'Donovan, Student, School of Pharmacy

## STUDENT PLACEMENT SUCCESS STORY IN THE SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

Sophie O'Donovan, a student in the School of Pharmacy shares her positive industry placement experience.

'I am currently undertaking an experiential learning placement within the QA department of Pfizer, Ringaskiddy. Despite my initial concerns, my experience working remotely has been positive thus far, thanks to the efforts of both my preceptor and QA to integrate me into the team.'

Not only have I gained insight into the profession of pharmacy within industry, I have also learned how to stay actively involved whilst operating outside the normal work environment.'





## In Memory of Tomás G. Lyons M.D.

The death has occurred of Dr Tomás Lyons (Consultant Oncologist) New York and formerly of Ballynote West, Kilrush, Co. Clare.

Tomás died suddenly and unexpectedly on Tuesday, 29th September, at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Centre, while on duty. Predeceased by his loving brother Seán. Beloved Son of heartbroken parents T.J and Teresa. Most adored brother of Sineád, Brian and Therese. Sadly missed by his loving partner David. Deeply missed by his cherished nieces and nephews and much loved by his brothers in law Denis and Mark and sister in law Laura, aunts, uncles, cousins, wide circle of friends and wonderful work colleagues.

In 2007, Dr Lyons completed his Bachelor of Medicine, surgery, and obstetrics (MB, BCh, BAO) degree at the University College Cork, where he received a merit scholarship upon entry for receiving a maximum score on his college entrance exams. In 2010, he received his Member of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (MRCPI) and completed internship and residency in internal medicine at Cork University Hospital in 2008 and 2010, respectively. Dr Lyons completed his residency and fellowship in medical oncology at Cork University Hospital in 2016, with hospital rotations at Beaumont

Hospital, Mater Misericordiae Hospital, and St. Vincent's University Hospital in Dublin. He joined MSK in 2016 to complete his advanced medical oncology fellowship. In 2016, he also received the prestigious Ainsworth Scholarship from the University of Cork to support his post-graduate fellowship in the United States. Dr Lyons was a recipient of many awards throughout his career, including the 2014 and 2016 Oncology Research Award from the Irish Society of Medical Oncology, which he received for melanoma research.

A Requiem Mass will take place for Tomás' family and close friends at St. Senan's Church, Kilrush, Co. Clare on Thursday, 8th October, following which Tomás was laid to rest in All Saints Cemetery, Kilrush.

If you wish to leave a message of condolence, please use the link below. Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired, can be made on: <http://mskcc.convio.net/goto/TomasGLyonsMD> to help continue the research Tomás was doing in the speciality of Breast Cancer.

Think of Tomás as living in the hearts of all those he touched. For nothing loved is ever lost and he was loved so very much.





## Calling all scientists! Mentors sought for a unique program: Become part of a dynamic international community at Global Talent Mentoring!

Are you a scientist, mathematician, IT expert, or other specialist in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medical sciences (STEMM) and would like to support highly talented, motivated, young people by sharing your specialized knowledge and experience with them? Then join the community of mentors at Global Talent Mentoring!

Global Talent Mentoring is an online mentoring program led by Prof. Dr. Heidrun Stoeger and her research team at the University of Regensburg that fosters excellence in STEMM worldwide for exceptionally talented youth through evidence-based, long-term online mentoring. The mentees are truly outstanding, hardworking young talents in STEMM from around the world – and exceptionally motivated to pursue excellence in a specific STEMM domain. The mentors are scientists and other practicing STEMM experts working in the private and public sectors. The program is free of charge for participants and starts in late 2020. Global Talent Mentoring would be thrilled to welcome experts from University College Cork.

### Why become a mentor volunteer for Global Talent Mentoring?

Join an inspiring and intellectually stimulating global network of other STEMM experts and highly motivated, extraordinarily talented students. Mentors at Global Talent Mentoring also make the valuable contribution of equal access to knowledge by supporting excellent students in STEMM who may not have immediate access to the support they need to develop their talents.

### How can I become a mentor volunteer?

Please submit the Mentor Volunteer Form at [www.globaltalentmentoring.org/mentor](http://www.globaltalentmentoring.org/mentor) by 31 October 2020. For the last question (“How did you learn about us?”) please select “University College Cork”. For more information, please visit [www.globaltalentmentoring.org](http://www.globaltalentmentoring.org)