



## PRESS RELEASE

### Medical Research Charities Group launches “The Health Research Landscape in Ireland: What Researchers Say”

#### *New Irish Health Research Forum to be established*

The Medical Research Charities Group (MRCG) today launches the findings from the first major study into the health research environment in Ireland as perceived by health researchers. The study, “**The Health Research Landscape in Ireland: What Researchers Say**” was commissioned by the MRCG to understand Ireland’s current health research landscape from the perspective of researchers.

Despite Ireland having sustained its strong support for health research throughout the economic crisis a number of issues still remain which have been identified in the report:

- **There are gaps in enabling infrastructure for health research, and financial sustainability is a concern.**
- **Particular important areas of research are not prioritised.**
- **Support is focused on the earliest stages of research training and on well-established researchers.**
- **There is limited engagement with potential users of research findings.**
- **The systematic involvement in research of patients or other lay people is not well developed.**
- **The contribution of medical research charities is not recognised in policy documents.**

A key recommendation in the report is the establishment of the **Irish Health Research Forum: A Single Voice for Research to Improve Health**. The Irish Health Research Forum (IHRF) will be a partnership of organisations that influence health research in Ireland and will allow these bodies to work together to enable high quality research, to support research careers and to promote the involvement of service users.

Philip Watt, MRCG Chairman said: “Health research in Ireland needs a renewed vision and commitment that will create a world class health research landscape, providing translatable benefits to patients. The IHRF, which the MRCG are establishing, will aim to contribute to this renewed vision in a forward looking and constructive way by bringing together all the key stakeholders, including patient groups, to engage on a number of levels to:

- **Ensure greater emphasis on the patient perspective in all dimensions of patient research.**
- **Determine strategic and holistic approach to the identification and exploitation of opportunities and obstacles.**
- **Contribute in creating a world class health research environment and improve national health.**

“Medical Research Charities have been instrumental in supporting health research in this country, and the aim of the IHRF will be to bring added value to the sector, helping to shape and inform Government policy on health research. The Forum will help to ensure that the health research sector is agile and responsive to new developments, especially at a national policy level,” concluded Philip Watt.

**Ends**

The Health Research Landscape in Ireland: What Researchers Say can be found at [www.mrcg.ie](http://www.mrcg.ie)

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### **About the MRCG**

The Medical Research Charities Group (MRCG) is an umbrella group of 36 charities that seeks to generate dynamic medical research in Ireland, driving a greater understanding of how illness can be prevented, how it can be diagnosed earlier and treated more effectively with the ultimate goal of improving the nation's health.

**MRCG Members: Alpha One Foundation, Alzheimer Society of Ireland, Arthritis Ireland, Asthma Society of Ireland, Breakthrough Cancer Research, Children's Fund for Health, Temple Street Hospital, COPD Support Ireland, Cystic Fibrosis Ireland, Cystinosis Foundation Ireland, DEBRA Ireland, Diabetes Ireland Research Alliance, Duchenne Ireland, Epilepsy Ireland, Fighting Blindness, Friends of the Rotunda, Heart Children Ireland, Inclusion Ireland, Irish Cancer Society, Irish Heart Foundation, Irish Nephrology Society, Irish Thoracic Society, MS Ireland, Muscular Dystrophy Ireland, Parkinson's Association of Ireland, Raynauds and Scleroderma Ireland, Research & Education Foundation: Sligo General Hospital, Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Research Foundation, Sightsavers International (Ireland), St John of God Research Foundation, St Patrick's Hospital Foundation, St Vincent's Anaesthesia Foundation, Children's Medical & Research Foundation: Crumlin Hospital, The Mater Foundation, The Rutland Centre, The Saoirse Foundation.**