

HRCI Strategy

2020 – 2023

Together for better health research

hrci.ie



Background to the strategy

Over the course of our previous strategy (2016 – 2019), there were many positive developments for the organisation. Amongst these were the following:

- The **appointment of the first CEO** for HRCI.
- A **rename of the organisation** from the Medical Research Charities Group to Health Research Charities Ireland and an aligned rebrand, to be more reflective of the organisation's membership and activity.
- A **reinvigoration of the Irish Health Research Forum**. This involved the strengthening of the high-level Steering Group, the expansion of the mailing list to over 600 diverse stakeholders and a move towards making the development of recommendations to address challenges for health research in Ireland.
- An **increased focus on public and patient involvement (PPI)**, through a Shared Learning Group for our members and collaborations with many relevant stakeholders.
- **Increased support for our members** through more networking opportunities, more guidance documents aimed at developing and promoting research and increased opportunities to hear from other leaders in health research.
- The **further strengthening of the Joint Funding Scheme**, run in partnership with the Health Research Board (HRB), with a particular focus on the PPI elements of the scheme.
- **The development of stronger, multi-channel communications**. We tripled our numbers of Twitter followers to almost 2,000, developed a new website, started sharing our newsletter externally and started a blog.
- The development of many **new external connections and partnerships** with a broad range of stakeholders involved in health research.
- A **refinement of our activities** to ensure a focus on health research in its many forms.
- A **strengthening of the charity's governance**, including our practices in reporting, financial management, HR and all aspects of how the organisation is run. In 2019 the HRCI Board signed-off on our compliance with the Charities Governance Code, two years ahead of the date when reporting on compliance will be made mandatory by the Charities Regulator.

Looking forward to the next three years

We made very strong progress with limited resources over the course of our previous strategy. It is now time to consolidate that progress and to extend our influence further, in ways that are meaningful to our objectives. It is our intention to be responsive, collaborative and ambitious in our work.

Our Vision

Improved lives through a united community of health research charities.

Our Mission

We will achieve our vision through leading a vibrant, impactful and patient-led network of Irish health research charities.

Our Values

- ◆ We are always guided in our actions by the needs of our member organisations and Irish patients.
- ◆ We are ambitious in our aims which we achieve through strong leadership.
- ◆ We are inclusive, transparent and act with integrity in all our dealings.
- ◆ We are collaborative in our approach and use our resources wisely.



Image: Responses to a 2019 HRCI member survey question, asking what the respondents value most about HRCI.

Our Strategic aims

1. Ensure impactful health research through increased patient and public involvement (PPI)

Positioned at the interface of science and society, HRCI and our members have a very important role to play in PPI. With a focus on ensuring meaningful involvement, we will prioritise support for our members as they involve their respective communities in their own research decision-making and as they facilitate researchers to undertake PPI. We will also work to highlight the value and perspectives of our members with the health research community and to amplify our efforts through partnerships with other PPI focused groups. We will achieve this aim through the following objectives:

a) Host a PPI Shared Learning Group for HRCI members

We will continue to run and develop our valued PPI Shared Learning Group for our members, to support them, and to facilitate their support of each other, in their PPI activities.

b) Provide practical PPI supports through guides, events, templates and one-to-one support

We will respond to the PPI-related needs of our members through developing and sharing with them practical tools and resources.

c) Strengthen PPI in the Joint Funding Scheme

We will work with the HRB to support the further embedding of meaningful PPI in all aspects of the scheme.

d) Partner with other PPI-focused organisations/groups to increase PPI nationally

We will partner with other organisations with an interest in PPI nationally and internationally to increase the quality and quantity of PPI undertaken in Irish health research.

e) Advise all stakeholders on member perspectives in relation to PPI

Our members have a unique perspective on PPI which we will work to share with all relevant parties.

f) Communicate the importance of PPI through talks, blogs, social media etc.

Through all our communication channels, we will increase awareness and highlight the importance of PPI.

2. Facilitate an increase in the quantity and quality of health research through the Joint Funding Scheme

The Joint Funding Scheme, which we run in partnership with the HRB, offers the opportunity for our members to obtain matched funding in order to support research of relevance to their communities. It is therefore highly valued by our members and helps to ensure that, even for charities very new to research, their projects are being funded according to international best practice. We will achieve this aim through the following objectives:

a) Partner with the HRB to manage and optimise the JFS

We will continue to work with the HRB to ensure that the scheme is meeting the needs of our members and that it is running optimally. We will place particular focus on all elements of the scheme that require our members' involvement.

b) Increase the number of applications to the JFS

Through raising awareness of the scheme amongst the Irish health research community, by supporting our members to participate and through increasing our number of members over time, we will aim to increase the number of funding applications received through the charities.

c) Increase the quality of applications to the JFS

Through supporting our members in their research governance, guiding their communication with their research communities and our support for PPI, we will aim to increase the quality of funding applications received by our members.

d) Inform politicians and policy makers about the importance of the Joint Funding Scheme and broader funding for health research

Through our advocacy work we will highlight the importance of funding and support for health research in Ireland, using the Joint Funding Scheme as an example of success.

3. Support and inform HRCI members, to increase their capacity to engage in health research

One of our key roles is to support our member organisations in all aspects of their health research activities. We do this in many ways, but key amongst them is to engender a sense of community, in which support can come from many places. We will also aim to demonstrate leadership, remaining informed of and involved in developments in the health research environment, so that we can keep our members up-to-date and prepared. We will achieve this aim through the following objectives:

a) Increase the capacity of our members to engage in all forms of health research, through events, guidelines and educational talks

We will aim to respond to our members' needs and keep them abreast of key topics through these various avenues.

b) Provide networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities through Board/member meetings and other events

Through our inclusive Board meetings, our PPI Shared Learning Group and various other events each year, we will create opportunities for our members to connect and learn from each other.

c) Inform members and other stakeholders about relevant developments and opportunities through a range of communication channels

We will continue to refine and develop our communications and to communicate news of relevance.

d) Provide one-to-one support, on an as-needed basis

In a membership organisation of our current size, it is possible to support our members individually and we will support them in their health research activities as they require.

e) Alert members to research funding opportunities for charities

We will aim to alert our members to research-related funding opportunities for charities that they might be able to avail of.

f) Steadily increase membership numbers

By increasing our profile, communicating our value and expanding our networks, we hope to attract new members, to increase the value of our community and to help with the long-term sustainability of the organisation.

4. Positively influence Ireland's development as an excellent place to do health research

As a representative body for 40 health research charities, many of whom are household names, we have a mandate and responsibility to do what is in our power to improve the Irish health research environment. As an independent, disease-agnostic and patient-focused organisation we are also well-positioned to make a difference on behalf of our members and the patients they represent.

We anticipate a focus over the next three years on topics such as genomics, patient registries, rare disease research, patient impact from research, legislation of relevance and the progression of all forms of health research. We will achieve this aim through the following objectives:

a) Run the Irish Health Research Forum (IHRF)

Managing the IHRF will be a significant but worthwhile investment for us. It will involve the maintenance of a high-level, multi-stakeholder Steering Group, the running of twice-annual events on pertinent topics determined by the Steering Group and the production of reports and recommendations.

b) Act as the collective voice of member organisations, to raise awareness of their research activities and to highlight issues of importance to them.

We will aim to raise awareness of the often-hidden research work of our member organisations and represent their views on key topics with relevant stakeholders. In order to facilitate this, we will strengthen our leadership role, through our engagements, collaborations and communications.

c) Raise awareness and understanding of the value of health research through our communications

We will aim to increase awareness and understanding of the value of all forms of health research amongst all our stakeholders, through our various communications channels, including social media, our website, newsletter and blog.

d) Collaborate with a wide array of health research stakeholders on common goals

As a small organisation with limited resources, collaboration is very important for us to achieve our aims. We will maintain and develop new national collaborations with organisations aligned to our mission and will also seek to engage internationally, in order to ensure our awareness of international developments and best practice.

For further information

For further information on our activities, governance, finances or organisational structures, please visit our website. Our most recent annual report is generally a great place to start!

<https://hrci.ie/annual-reports/>

We welcome any views you have on our strategy. Please don't hesitate to get in touch.





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