



Health Research  
Charities Ireland

# HRCI Conference Agenda

Wednesday, 18th September 2019

#health  
research  
matters

WiFi: WoodQuayVenue Password: Viking1100

<b>13.30pm</b>	<b>Registration and Networking Opportunity</b>
<b>14.00pm</b>	<b>Welcome:</b> Dr Avril Kennan; CEO, MRCG
<b>14.05pm</b>	<b>Launch of the new look MRCG:</b> Linda McGrath; Events and Communications Coordinator, MRCG
<b>14.10pm</b>	<b>MRCG Member Case Study:</b> Dr Laura O'Philbin, Alzheimers Society
<b>14.25pm</b>	<b>Panel Discussion: Learning from the past and looking to the future of the MRCG</b> Michael Griffith; Founder & Former Chair, MRCG John McCormack; Interim CEO, Sunbeam House Services & Former Chair, MRCG Philip Watt; CEO, Cystic Fibrosis Ireland & Former Chair, MRCG Suzanne McCormack; CEO, Irish Thoracic Society & Chair, MRCG <b>Panel Chair:</b> Dr Avril Kennan; CEO, MRCG
<b>15.00pm</b>	<b>MRCG Member Case Study:</b> Prof Mark Little, Irish Kidney Association
<b>15.10pm</b>	<b>Coffee Break/Poster Viewing and Networking Opportunity</b>
<b>15.40pm</b>	<b>MRCG Member Case Study:</b> Dr Mary Rabbitte, All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care (AIHPC)
<b>15.50pm</b>	<b>Panel Discussion: Research towards a healthier Ireland</b> Dr Michael Harty, T.D. Independent Roisin Shortall, T.D. Social Democrats Stephen Donnelly, T.D. Fianna Fail Louise O'Reilly, T.D. Sinn Fein Senator Colm Burke, Fine Gael <b>Panel Chair:</b> Jonathan McCrea, Journalist / TV and radio broadcaster
<b>16.40pm</b>	<b>Audience Q&amp;A</b>
<b>17.00pm</b>	<b>Conference close:</b> Suzanne McCormack; Chair, MRCG & CEO; Irish Thoracic Society
<b>17:05pm</b>	<b>Post Conference Drinks Reception</b>



**Senator Colm Burke** is serving on the 25th Seanad Industrial and Commercial Panel. He is the Fine Gael Seanad Spokesman on Health. Colm was a member of the European Parliament for the Ireland South constituency between 2007 and 2009. He was a member of Cork City Council from 1995-2007 and was Lord Mayor of Cork in 2003-2004. Senator Burke has been involved in the publishing of two private members bills; the Civil Law (Missing Persons) Bill 2013 and the Medical Practitioners (Amendment) Bill 2012. The Medical Practitioners (Amendment) Bill 2014 has since been published by the Minister for Health.



**Stephen Donnelly** is a TD for Wicklow and East Carlow. He ran for office in 2011, in response to Ireland's growing economic and social crises. Stephen has worked across many sectors, including private equity, retail, public infrastructure, healthcare, education, international development, the voluntary and social sectors. At the Harvard Kennedy School he studied international development, with a focus on rebuilding economies and protecting and strengthening vulnerable populations.



**Michael Griffith** was a founder member of the MRCG, as well as other a number of other well-known health research charities in Ireland, including Fighting Blindness and DEBRA Ireland. He was the Chief Executive of Fighting Blindness from 1996 to 2008 and himself lives with a rare genetic condition that has caused his sight to degenerate. His support and fundraising efforts led to a very successful vision lab in Trinity College and he has been a high-profile driving force in patient-focused research in Ireland and internationally. Earlier this year he received a lifetime achievement award from the highly-regarded European rare diseases organisation, EURORDIS.



**Dr Michael Harty**, T.D. is a GP in Kilmihil, County Clare where he has run a single-handed rural practice for the last 32 years. He entered politics for the first time as an Independent candidate put forward by No Doctor No Village – a grassroots campaign movement for the preservation of rural communities and the transformation of our health service based on putting patients first. He has served as a TD for the Clare constituency since the 2016 general election and was appointed Chair of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health in April 2016.



**Dr Avril Kennan** has a PhD in genetics and many years subsequent lab experience working on human genetic conditions. She moved from the lab in 2007 to become a patient advocate with DEBRA Ireland. In her role there, as Head of Research and Advocacy, she led a number of international initiatives including the development of evidence-based clinical guidelines and an international patient registry. Dr Kennan has sat on many Boards and Committees, including the DEBRA International Executive Committee and the Rare Diseases Ireland Board. In her role as CEO of the MRCG she is passionate about supporting medical research charities and promoting their role in society. She was one of the founders of the Irish Health Research Forum.



**Suzanne McCormack** is CEO of the Irish Thoracic Society (ITS), the national organisation representing respiratory healthcare professionals on the island of Ireland. Since joining the ITS in 2006, Suzanne has developed the Society's work in leading and advancing the care of people with respiratory disease through advocacy, research and education. Suzanne previously chaired the MRCG Advocacy and Communications Group, is a Board Member of COPD Support Ireland and co-founded the Irish Lung Health Alliance.



**John McCormack** has been Interim CEO of Sunbeam House Services since August 2019. Prior to this role, John acted as Interim Director of Services for the North East and Dublin South with Enable Ireland. John was appointed CEO of the Irish Cancer Society in 2002, having joined the Society in 1989. He was formerly Company Secretary and Financial Controller. John is a member of the Institute of Certified Public Accountants and holds an MBA from DCU.

In 1991 John founded the Irish Charities Tax Reform Group. John has sat on the following boards; Health Research Board, Alcohol Action Ireland, ASH Ireland, Medical Research Charities Group and the National Cancer Registry Ireland.



**Jonathan McCrea** is a multi-award-winning TV and radio broadcaster and founder of Whipsmart Media, a communications consultancy based in Dublin. He is the founder of science communications conference SCI:COM and a highly regarded keynote speaker on future technologies and communication strategies.

With 15 years of experience in broadcasting and journalism, Jonathan is also the creator of "Futureproof", Newstalk's flagship science programme that has won 11 national and international radio awards in the 9 years it has been on air.



**Linda McGrath** is the Events and Communications Coordinator with MRCG. In her role Linda has been working in the charity sector since 2012 and specialises in event management, sponsorship acquisition, public affairs and communications. She has previously worked with the Temple Street Foundation, Dublin Simon Community and Ruhama. Prior to moving into the not for profit sector, Linda worked in Arts Management. In her role with the MRCG, she manages the events, seminars and conferences, the biannual Irish Health Research Forum meetings and MRCG Communications, including social media and website updates.



**Professor Mark Little** was appointed as the Fottrell Professor of Nephrology, School of Medicine, Trinity Translational Medicine Institute, in 2012. He is a Fellow of Trinity College Dublin and of the Royal College of Physicians (London), and a Consultant Nephrologist in Tallaght and Beaumont Hospitals. He is an international leader in translational autoimmune disease with a focus on the rare condition ANCA vasculitis. With support from his consultant colleagues, he established the Trinity Health Kidney Centre, an academic health science centre that links clinical, education and research endeavours in Nephrology across Trinity College, St James's Hospital and Tallaght Hospital.



**Dr Laura O'Philbin** joined the ASI Research Team in January 2019. She is The ASI Research Officer and manages some new and exciting projects, with a particular focus on building and coordinating research involvement and engagement among people with dementia, caregivers, researchers, and other stakeholders.

Laura has a PhD from Bangor University in Wales, where she was based in the Dementia Services Development Centre. After completing her PhD in 2018, Laura worked in academic research before joining The ASI.



**Louise O'Reilly** is the Sinn Fein TD for Dublin Fingal and the party spokesperson on health and Vice Chair of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health.

Prior to her election Louise was a full time Trade Union Organiser in the health sector and a member of the ICTU Public Services Committee. Louise is committed to working for universal healthcare based on need not ability to pay. As well as her role on the health committee Louise was a member of the Committee on the Future of Healthcare (Sláintecare) and the Committee on the Eighth Amendment.



**Dr Mary Rabbitte** joined AIIHPC as a Programme Manager in April 2017 where she leads on the Institute's research programme and supports the continued strategic development of the Institute's Palliative Care Research Network (PCRN). As well as working collaboratively as part of the AIIHPC team on the strategic and operational implementation of the Institute's programmes.

As a clinician she has also worked psychotherapeutically with people with life limiting illnesses with special focus on people with Motor Neurone Disease (MND).



**Róisín Shortall** is a Social Democrats T.D. for Dublin North West. She was first elected to the Dáil in 1992 and was re-elected at every election since.

Róisín has, throughout her time in the Dáil, been Labour Party spokesperson on Justice, Health, Children, Education, Transport and Social Protection. In March 2011, Róisín was appointed Minister of State at the Department of Health with responsibility for Primary Care. She resigned this position in September 2012 due to significant policy differences. She also resigned from the Parliamentary Labour Party.



**Philip Watt** has been CEO of Cystic Fibrosis Ireland since 2009 and has worked to overhaul CF services in Ireland and to promote access to new and innovative therapies.

Philip is currently chairperson of the Irish Donor Network (IDN) which has been active in advocating for higher donor and transplant rates and in changing the organ donor consent approach in Ireland. He is also Chair of the Rare Disease Taskforce and is author of a wide range of books and articles on social policy, poverty and equality issues.