

## Heart Failure Community Calls on Government to Prioritise 'Forgotten' Illness affecting 1 in 5 People <sup>[1]</sup>

### Education & Awareness <sup>[2]</sup>

Treatment of Heart Failure, a 'forgotten' chronic condition, is no longer a lost cause, according to the authors of a new report entitled 'Heart Failure Country Barometer: Ireland'. The report outlines four key policy priorities and calls on the Government to implement this framework to improve the lives of 90,000 people affected by Heart Failure<sup>6</sup>.

**Minister of State for Gaeltacht Affairs and Natural Resources, Sean Kyne, TD** officially launched, and contributed to, the report which, most importantly, provides solutions to this major health challenge which costs the state €660 million per year<sup>1</sup>. Heart Failure, a serious and often debilitating chronic condition, has a worse prognosis than many of the most common forms of cancer and can lead to poor quality of life for those affected<sup>4</sup>.

The 'Heart Failure Country Barometer: Ireland' report, developed by Croí, the Heartbeat Trust, and supported by Novartis, with contributions from medical professionals, patients and advocacy experts, highlights four key policies to prioritise and recommends how to achieve them:

#### Heart Failure Barometer

1. **Make Heart Failure a national priority:** Explicitly mention Heart Failure within existing chronic disease policies and ensure there are sufficient resources to implement the HSE's National Clinical Program for Heart Failure on a national level, with adequate funding for both GP and hospital care.
2. **Prioritise speedy diagnosis and treatment:** Ensure that patients with symptoms of heart failure are diagnosed as early as possible, without delay.
- 3.

**Ensure consistent and coordinated patient care:** Create a coordinated, community-based national program between the hospital and community care at general practice level to provide patients greater continuity of care and encourage patient self-management.

4.

**Increase awareness and understanding of Heart Failure:** Support a national HF prevention program by raising public awareness of the risk of developing HF and ensuring access to high quality information and support for both the public and the medical profession.

Commenting on the report, **Professor Ken McDonald, Consultant Cardiologist and National Clinical Lead for Heart Failure** said, “Chronic illness threatens to overrun our healthcare system. Heart failure, as the most complex of these illnesses, can be used as a pilot to establish effective methods of managing chronic diseases, primarily in the community, with the support of hospital-based specialists, when needed. A large number of premature deaths still occur as a result of lack of knowledge of HF and its symptoms. Better recognition would prompt people to seek treatment at an earlier stage, leading to more accurate diagnosis, decreased risk of hospitalisations and improved survival rates. Most types of Heart Failure are preventable, patients who are treated early can significantly improve their outcome. The policy asks we are calling for will improve the prevention, treatment and management of Heart Failure in Ireland.”

**Neil Johnson, Chief Executive, Croí** said, “This report brings together medical expertise, patient insights, advocacy experience and economic data to create a framework for our Government to improve the lives of those affected by Heart Failure in Ireland. The burden that Heart Failure can have on patients’ lives, and the State, needs to be improved as Heart Failure treatment is no longer a lost cause. We know what we need to do to protect 90,000 hearts in Ireland, and the additional 10,000 newly diagnosed each year. Now we must do it.”

In Europe, 15 million people live with HF. Currently there is no EU-wide strategy supporting public awareness, prevention, diagnosis and management of heart failure. Strong leadership by European and national policy makers is essential to reduce the future burden of the condition. In October, a new Written Declaration on Heart Failure (HF) was launched in the European parliament, in partnership with patients, professionals and parliamentarians. Irish MEPs Mairead McGuinness and Nessa Childers are supporting the Written Declaration on Heart Failure.

Click the link here, to access the Heart Failure Country Barometer: Ireland, report   
[HF\\_barometer\\_Irish\\_A4\\_LS\\_081116\\_SINGLES.pdf](https://www.novartis.ie/stories/education-awareness/heart-failure-community-calls-government-prioritise-forgotten-illness) <sup>[3]</sup>

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