

## Press Release 09/09/15: Immediate Release

### College of Psychiatrists of Ireland Calls for Increased Frontline Mental Health Resources

On World Suicide Prevention Day, 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2015, College of Psychiatrists of Ireland stresses the importance of reaching out and saving lives.

**Without 24/7 access to multi-disciplinary mental health assessments and interventions, preventable loss of life can occur, this is not acceptable.**

Dr John Hillery, Director of Communications and Public Education of College of Psychiatrists of Ireland says; *'Suicide is preventable and help is available, but further support through education and service provision is needed'*.

The College reiterates the need for increased **frontline mental health resources** to ensure professional support is available nationwide 24 hours a day and seven days a week to people of all ages experiencing psychological distress. Greater investment in education aimed at prevention, recognition and resolution of personal mental health problems will also have a positive impact on the occurrence of suicide and suicidal behaviour in our communities.

In the national policy document *A Vision for Change* it is stated that arrangements should be made for the provision of 24/7 multi-disciplinary crisis intervention for those in psychiatric distress. We know that many who attempt suicide have sought help unsuccessfully in the preceding period. The lack of 24/7 access to multi-disciplinary mental health assessments and interventions still affect the rights of people in mental distress.

Dr. Ciaran Corcoran, Chairman of the **Faculty of Adult Psychiatry** of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland says: *'Suicide can be prevented -it is important for those experiencing suicidal thoughts to reach out to family, friends, supports in the community or professionals. Mental health problems can be treated.'*

Dr. Mia Mc Laughlin Old Age Psychiatrist and Chair of the **Faculty of Psychiatry of Later Life** emphasises the importance of acknowledging older people in their time of crisis: *'many older people develop mental ill health after a lifetime of good health but there is often an ageist view that it is 'acceptable' to feel depressed given a person's age and circumstances. We all should remember that while loss events and physical aging are inevitable, the mental ill health experienced is very treatable.'*

Dr. Helen Keeley Chair of the **Faculty of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry** commented saying *'The inadequate resources that have been allocated towards Mental Health Provision are now well recognised. As a society, we seem not to value supporting our mental health as much as other developed countries with less of our budget being allocated in this direction. This is a pity, as the good news regarding suicide prevention is that there are many straightforward and simple things that have been proven to be effective in reducing suicidal behaviour in young people. A general mental health programme delivered in schools has been shown to reduce self-harm'*.

ENDS

Dr John Hillery, Director of Communications and Public Education, is available for comment or interview on World Suicide Prevention Day, 2015.

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