



**The College of Psychiatry of Ireland**

*Coláiste Síciatrachta na hÉireann*

**Press Statement - 30<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

**The College of Psychiatry of Ireland welcome Minister Dempsey's proposal to reduce the legal limit of alcohol permitted for driving**

The College of Psychiatry of Ireland welcome Minister Dempsey's proposal to reduce the legal limit of alcohol permitted for driving, in line with recommendations of the EU and World Health Organisation.

The claims that the lower limits will have adverse effects on the social interaction of individuals, particularly in rural communities, are speculative. Assertions that this could lead to an increase in suicide rates are tentative in the extreme. *"Initiatives to tackle social fragmentation should focus on family support, fostering work connections and attachments and promoting volunteerism - all of which connect people to their community - rather than concentrating on access to local bars in cars"* a spokeswoman for the College said.

The significant contribution of alcohol to completed suicide and suicidal behaviour has much research evidence. Alcohol produces a well described depressant effect on mood, distorts judgment and brings impulsivity in its wake thus facilitating aggressive behaviour towards oneself and others.

Liberal licensing laws, aggressive marketing, political lobbying by the drinks industry and a lax regulatory environment contribute to suicidal acts therefore reforming and enforcing drink driving laws form a valuable piece of necessary regulation.

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