



Dr Miriam Kennedy, Director of Communication and Public Education
External Affairs & Policy (EAP) Department

Dear Colleagues,

The mission of the EAP Department is:

- **Improving the understanding of Psychiatry and Mental Health**
- **Collaboration with key players in the mental health field**
- **Advocating for improvements in the quality of mental healthcare throughout all sectors of society**
- **Communicating effectively with members and the public**



Having had the honour of commencing my role officially in August this year, as Director of Communication and Public Education for the College, I am really looking forward to working with the EAP Department and its activities that serve our profession. My predecessors Drs John Hillery, Anne Jeffers and Siobhán Barry (who sadly died on 17th November leaving us all with a great sense of loss) have all contributed majorly to achieving the goals of the department since the College began in 2009. I am delighted to build on their work and to contribute to the many upcoming developments planned in this area.

This newsletter aims to keep you up to speed with some of the work of the department and to **invite your input and expertise in the areas under development.**

One of the **main objectives** I will focus on from above is **'improving the understanding of Psychiatry'**. However, before further work is carried out on this we, as psychiatrists, can benefit from discussing and determining what our profession is about in 2017 and beyond in Ireland. This is especially important in 'post truth societies' and the small global village enabled by social media where everyone can seem to be an expert and opinion is presented as fact. **Engagement with the membership has started with a snapshot questionnaire** recently sent out which elicited a good response and **a workshop at the recent College Winter Conference in Dunboyne**. I hope to begin to formulate a consensus on this and plan further engagement over the next 18 months. Thank you to those who took the time to answer the questionnaire.

The EAP Department aims to **fulfill its objectives through varied external activities, media interaction, meetings and through its committees – Human Rights & Ethics Committee, Law Committee, REFOCUS Committee and with Faculties**. Recently, the College held the 3rd annual joint conference with SHINE on the 'Family's Role in Recovery'. Currently we have begun a **partnership with ARI (Advance Recovery Ireland)** to hold 2 workshops for members in the 2018 including support for developing a College position paper on Recovery. Our **Annual All Ireland College Spike Milligan Public Speaking Competition for medical schools** is taking place 6.30-9pm, 29th November in the Button Factory Temple Bar. It is always a highly entertaining and enjoyable event and a chance to see and hear some of our future doctors and psychiatrists. The event is CPD accredited and is free. I hope you can make it.

I encourage you, the members to come forward and work with me and the CPsychI EAP team, Andrea Ryder & Mary Hayes on short-term projects, once-off projects or to engage with us on media coverage or with any suggestions. Your expertise is what we need to communicate in a way that will truly improve the treatments available and the services for those suffering from mental illness. Likewise, the practice of psychiatry will be enabled if we as members are clear in our role and confident that our voice will be heard where it needs to be.

A recent BJPsych article entitled **'Shrink Rethink: Rebranding Psychiatry'** outlined what our mantra should be.

Do we agree with it?

'Psychiatrists are doctors who feel with their mind and think with their soul. They are just as comfortable with poetry as pathology. They see the person as whole. Psychiatrists understand the connection between the mind, the body and the soul. They are doctors who want to make a radical and transformational difference to the whole life of their patients. Psychiatrists are people who have the rare ability to treat the person, not the problem. Psychiatrists save lives.'

Please contact me directly on eapdirector@irishpsychiatry.ie or the College EAP Team Andrea Ryder, Manager (andrea@irishpsychiatry.ie) and Mary Hayes, Communications Assistant (mhayes@irishpsychiatry.ie).

Highlights of the EAP activity are overleaf.



Advocating and support for the **Public Health (Alcohol) Bill** through media statements, activity as a member of AHAI (Alcohol Health Alliance Ireland) steering group and various interaction with politicians over the last few months. The role alcohol plays in mental illness and distress over the life span, as well as in suicide and self-harm, have been highlighted. Dr John Hillery and Dr Bobby Smyth have been the College spokespersons on many occasions recently.

World Mental Health day event, 12th November: A delegation from the College met with Oireachtas members in Leinster House for a drop in coffee and chat on psychiatry, mental health issues and mental health services. It proved to be a very informative and hopefully helpful event for the Oireachtas members who took the time to come.



Perspectives for the professionals: the role of family in promoting recovery. The 3rd Annual Joint Conference with Shine was held in Waterford this year. Very informative presentations combined with interactive panel discussions provided a great forum for professionals, family members/carers and patients /service users.



Mental Health Summit - Dr John Hillery, President and REFOCUSer Laura Lousie were panel members with Anne O'Connor, HSE Mental Health Division & Shari McDaid Mental Health Reform at this one day conference for all stakeholders in mental health and service provision. The topic for discussion was 'Moving forward: Implementing mental healthcare policy'.



EAP Committee Reports Activity Externally

Human Rights & Ethics Committee

Chair: Dr Pauline Twomey

Aims:

- To provide support and advice to the College and its members on the ethical dimension of patient care
- To ensure there is an ethical input into College submissions, policy and position papers
- To ensure members have an awareness and expertise in Human Rights Legislation and its impact on mental health care

Next Meeting: 28th November 2017

Working on:

- Parallel Session** with Faculty of General Adult Psychiatry at Winter Conference 2017. Main speaker is Dr Piers Benn, Heythrop College, London – *Is Addiction a Moral problem?*
- College Code of Ethics for Psychiatry** in line with recent Medical Council Professional Code of Conduct. Members were surveyed to ascertain their views on suggested 12 principles that will underpin a draft College code. A sub-working group of the committee is currently reviewing the response around the principles as part of developing a College code.
- Developing training** in ethics and human rights for trainees and professional competence. One member has devised an e-learning module, the committee is reviewing the current curriculum and aim to develop training days and workshops and potential topics at the PC Hot Topics series.

Law Committee

Chair: Dr Mike Scully

Aims: To provide expert psychiatric opinion based on mental health and law and to contribute to development of better mental health law.

Objectives:

- To respond to requests for submissions on legal issues related to mental health
- To inform and educate members on matters related to law and mental health
- To assist the college in informing the general public on matters related to law and mental health

Next Meeting: December 2017

- Review of the Mental Health Act** – provided a College submission on the Expert Group report and review of the Act.
- Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Bill** - awaiting further developments on advance directives and DoLs
- The Criminal Law (Insanity) Act** - no update.
- Medicinal Cannabis** and proposed legislation: Dr M Scully invited to HPR group to review and report to Minister Harris on medicinal cannabis.

REFOCUS CPSYCHI - Recovery Experience Forum of Carers & Users of the services

Joint Chairs: Dr Anne Jeffers and Ms Kara Madden

Aims: To engage actively in genuine partnership with the College so that training, ongoing competence and day to day practice of Psychiatry, is informed and guided by those who have had experience of mental illness, or who have cared for those with mental illness.

The forum comprises 23 members which includes service users/patients(8), family members/carers(8) & psychiatrists(7). **Next Meeting:** December 2017

- 3 one day meetings** held this year and several subgroup meetings
Produced **REFOCUS Annual report for 2016**
- Two College perspective papers drafted** – *'Family Dynamics: ensuring psychiatrists & mental health teams address family dynamics'* and *'Spirituality and its place in mental health practice: raising awareness'*. It is hoped after consultation with faculties and management committee that the papers will be ready for consideration by Council next year
- Monetary Impact of Mental illness:** A sub group is researching and working on developing workshops for members in 2018 with the aim of producing a paper.

External Stakeholders

Meeting with Ceann Comhairle, Seán Ó Fearghail; The College proposed holding a 'master class' and interactive session for TDs and their staff in Leinster House to inform them of psychiatry services, role of psychiatrists and treatments to name some items and aid them with issues arising in their constituencies. The Ceann Comhairle was very receptive to this and we agreed to aim to hold this event at the end of January 2018 as the beginning of a process.

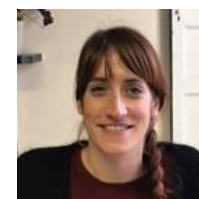
SHINE: The 3rd Annual Joint Conference with Shine was held in Waterford this year again entitled *Perspectives for the professionals: the role of family in promoting recovery*. Very informative presentations on confidentiality, the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act, ARI, HSE Engagement department and carer education and experience combined with interactive panel discussions provided a great forum for professionals, family members/carers and patients/service users. We look forward to the 4th annual joint conference and developing further as an interactive practical and reflective day.

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