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## **Announcing the shortlist for the Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards 2012**

### **Congratulations to our fifteen shortlisted candidates!**

**Dublin, 12th April 2012-** The Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards 2012 have announced the fifteen shortlisted candidates that have been recognised for their outstanding efforts to communicate with people in a crystal clear way.

As a result of being shortlisted, the shortlisted entries will be invited to attend the Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards Ceremony in Dublin on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2012.

This year, there were a record number of entries into the Health Literacy Awards. Almost 150 entries were received from GPs, nurses, practice managers, physiotherapists, and hospital catering managers from across the country. The continued increase to the number of entries highlights the strong level of interest in health literacy in the healthcare environment in Ireland. Health literacy involves a person being able to understand basic health information whether they receive it in writing, in person or over the phone. It also involves a person having the knowledge to understand their options and make informed decisions about their own health.

Ms Ciara O'Rourke, External Affairs Director, MSD, and judge of the awards commented, "The shortlisted projects highlight the great work that is being done all over Ireland to help people better understand their own health. The recent EU Health Literacy survey proves that the more people understand their health, the better their health will be.<sup>1</sup> We are delighted to see the continued commitment in the healthcare sector to health literacy and would like to extend our congratulations to all those shortlisted."

Health literacy is an important issue in Ireland today. Recent EU research shows that four out of 10 people in Ireland have low health literacy and that vulnerable groups such as those experiencing long-term illness, financial hardship and those from lower socio-economic groups were seen to have the lowest levels of health literacy.<sup>1</sup> Low levels of health literacy can mean people have poorer health, are less able to look after themselves and are less able to get the most out of the healthcare system. <sup>1</sup>

Also speaking at the announcement of the shortlist was Inez Bailey, Director of the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), who said, "The record number of entries into the Awards this year shows that healthcare professionals are making great efforts to communicate in a clear, easy-to-understand way, using innovative approaches and rephrasing any specialised terms in plain language. We would like to offer our congratulations to the shortlisted projects and have no doubt that they will inspire others working in this area."

The Awards are a partnership between MSD and NALA with representation on the judging panel from the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), UCD, a General Practitioner, NALA, and Trinity College, Dublin.

For further information on the Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards, log onto [www.healthliteracy.ie](http://www.healthliteracy.ie).

## **Shortlist 2012**

### **Best Project in General Practice**

- Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) Student Health Centre. 'The No Umbrella Campaign'
- Mercer's Medical Centre. 'Travel Safely Information Booklet'
- Slievemore Clinic (Dublin Women's Clinic). 'Setting up of Free Information Evenings'

### **Best Project in a Hospital**

- Ms Norma Deasy, HSE South and South Infirmary Victoria University Hospital, Cork 'Newborn Hearing Screening Programme'
- National Cancer Control Programme and National NCCP Lung Cancer Teams. 'NCCP Rapid Access Lung Clinic Patient Booklets'
- Ms Una O'Brien, Our Lady of Lourdes, Drogheda. 'Teen Mom 2 B 'Teen Breast Feeding'

### **Best Project in the Community or in a Social Setting**

- Arthritis Ireland, 'My Health Organiser'
- Diabetes Ireland, Managing Chronic Health Conditions at School, a Resource Pack for Teachers and Parents
- National Cancer Screening Service (NCSS), Northside Community Health Initiative (NICHE) 'The Bra Project' – An arts for health project for the promotion of breast awareness and screening.

### **Best Health Promotion Project**

- Ms Maeve Cusack, National Cancer Screening Service (NCSS). 'Bespoke cancer screening training for community health workers in the Traveller Community'
- Mr Martin Grogan, HSE South Health Promotion Department. 'Busy Bodies' Adolescent Development Programme (Teacher and Parent Packs)'
- Dr Fenton Howell, Health Service Executive, Tobacco Social Marketing Working Group, 'QUIT Campaign'

### **Best Health Communication Through Journalism**

- Ms Deirdre Reynolds, Irish Independent, 'At 33, I thought I was too young to get breast cancer – but I was wrong'
- Mr Conor McGinnity, Ms Nicoline Greer and Mr Liam O'Brien, RTE Radio 1, 'My Dad's Depression'
- Ms Catherine Shanahan, Irish Examiner Publications, 'Prader willi syndrome piece'

## **ENDS**

### **References:**

1. EU Health Literacy Survey - Irish Results Notable Findings Report 2011

### **MSD in Ireland**

MSD is a global healthcare leader working to help the world be well. MSD is known as Merck in the United States and Canada and MSD elsewhere. MSD employs 2,300 people directly in Ireland and provides an additional 9,000 indirect jobs through its operations at sites throughout Ireland. In the last five decades the company has invested over €2.2bn in Ireland. MSD is one of Ireland's leading exporters and contributes significantly towards making the pharmaceutical industry the country's leading export sector. MSD is a member of Guaranteed Irish and manufacturers or packages many of its leading products for the world market in Ireland.

Through our prescription medicines, vaccines, biologic therapies, and consumer care and animal health products, we work with customers and operate in more than 140 countries to deliver innovative health solutions. We also demonstrate our commitment to increasing access to healthcare through far-reaching policies, programs and partnerships. For more information, visit [www.msd.ie](http://www.msd.ie).

### **National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)**

The National Adult Literacy Agency is an independent membership organisation, concerned with developing policy, advocacy, research and offering advisory services in adult literacy work in Ireland. NALA was established in 1980 and has campaigned since then for the recognition of, and responses to, the adult literacy issue in Ireland. According to the last international survey, one in four Irish adults has difficulties reading and writing. For example, they may not be able to understand health information or fill out forms.

With this in mind, a lot of NALA's work involves developing policies and practices that reduce literacy-related barriers to accessing information – specifically in public services and the health sector. This has involved working with a number of government departments in training staff in literacy awareness and producing publications in plain English. As its focus is on everyday language, plain English is a style of presenting information that helps someone understand it the first time they read or hear it.