

Annual Report 2006



1966-2006
40
YEARS
Fighting Heart Disease & Stroke

The Irish Heart Foundation

Who we are and what we do

What is the Irish Heart Foundation?

The Irish Heart Foundation is Ireland's only national charity for heart health and is working to reduce premature death and disability from heart disease and stroke.

What Does the Irish Heart Foundation Do?

The Irish Heart Foundation:

- Provides information on heart health to the public and media
- Supports patients in managing heart disease and stroke
- Provides heart health programmes in schools and workplaces
- Co-ordinates the training of medics and the public in emergency lifesaving skills (CPR)
- Supports research, education and development in the medical profession
- Lobbies for patient treatment and services, as well as for an environment to make the healthier choice the easier choice.

Heart disease – Ireland's No.1 Killer

Approximately 10,000 people die each year from Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) – including coronary heart disease (CHD), stroke and other circulatory diseases. CVD is the most common cause of death in Ireland, accounting for 36% of all deaths. The largest number of these deaths relate to CHD – mainly heart attack – at 5,000. 22% of premature deaths (under age 65) are from CVD.

Stroke

Approximately 2,000 people die from stroke each year accounting for more deaths than breast cancer, lung cancer and bowel cancer combined. Approximately 10,000 people suffer a stroke annually and there are an estimated 30,000 people in the community with residual disability from stroke. The Heart Foundation is funding the first ever national audit of stroke services and plans to fund nurses to care for stroke patients in the community.

Funding

The Irish Heart Foundation receives most of its funding from donations from the public. A small share of funding is received from the Government.

History

The Irish Heart Foundation was established in 1966 and celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2006.

Staff and Offices

The IHF has 37 staff. The main office is in Dublin and there are seven regional offices in Cork, Sligo, Carrickmacross, Wexford, Galway, Carlow and Waterford.

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Cardiovascular disease and the Irish Heart Foundation – *Looking to the Future*

Prof. Eoin O'Brien, President, Irish Heart Foundation

I am delighted to have been appointed as President of the Irish Heart Foundation, an organisation I hold in high esteem. I am indebted to my predecessor Dr. Will Fennell for his cooperation and I look forward to working with him in the years ahead.

The goal of cardiovascular health should be a collaborative effort between the doctor, other healthcare professionals and the patient. While cardiac services and heart health have improved in recent years, there is much to be done in areas such as stroke prevention and management, in the management of heart failure and in promoting healthy diet and lifestyle.

The Irish Heart Foundation has established an efficient network across Irish society that is influencing cardiovascular health and awareness at all levels. If we hope to reduce stroke and heart attack, the major consequences of arterial disease, the public has to take a much more active role in managing the consequences of cardiovascular disease. These are chronic illnesses that do not go away, and therefore it is essential for patients to become involved with their doctors in managing the problems.

The approaches to the public from the Irish Heart Foundation differ in emphasis depending on the age of the subjects. For younger people it is important that they are informed about the advantages of a healthy lifestyle, such as taking exercise, a healthy diet, not smoking, avoiding excessive consumption of alcohol, restricting salt intake and cholesterol on cardiovascular fitness. While these issues are also relevant for older people, additional information is needed on the importance of family history and 'knowing their numbers' – weight, blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

The last 50 years has seen dramatic advances in the surgical management of cardiovascular disease. Examples are bypass surgery and stenting of diseased arteries. The current advances in drugs to treat and prevent arterial disease are capable of halving the occurrence of heart attack and stroke.

High blood pressure affects over a third of the adult population and this figure doubles after the age of 60 years. With the age of the Irish population over 65 set to increase steadily there is a challenge to anticipate high blood pressure and to treat it effectively so that the older community remains healthy with a good quality of life.

Blood pressure control at all ages is poor with the 'rule of halves' still applying, half of the people with high blood pressure are unaware of its existence, half of those diagnosed with high blood pressure are untreated and half of those who are treated are inadequately treated. If we could abolish the rule of halves stroke would be more than halved, resulting in 5,000 fewer strokes per year in the country. If you add to that the use of statins in addition to blood pressure lowering drugs and lifestyle modification we have the ability to make stroke a rare occurrence.

The doctor has to be prepared to convince the patient that the need for treatments and interventions is real, to give them the evidence and be prepared to argue the case. It is not a question of just writing a prescription. Patients, who will have drugs prescribed for the rest of their lives, must be convinced that this is going to be worthwhile. 24-hour blood pressure measurement is proving particularly important in demonstrating to both patients and their doctors that optimal blood pressure control is being achieved. This is especially

important as it is now known that night-time blood pressure predicts stroke and heart attack more accurately than any other measure of blood pressure.

The Irish Heart Foundation plays an important role in influencing the Department of Health and Children and the Health Service Executive on adopting measures that improve cardiovascular health. This ranges from convincing Government to put pressure on the food industry to provide healthy foods by, for example, reducing the salt content. The increasing occurrence of the metabolic syndrome and obesity in youth is very worrying and is related to excessive eating and eating unhealthy foods. The prevention of this condition can only be achieved by influencing eating habits and making healthy foods convenient and attractive. Furthermore, the health claims made by so-called 'functional foods' in their advertising is another issue to which the Foundation is giving careful attention.

The Heart Foundation is also working with the government to improve the facilities for treating patients with cardiovascular disease and this is badly needed in stroke management. The lack of stroke units in the country is particularly deplorable in view of the proven success of such units in other countries.

Another area in which the Heart Foundation can influence the delivery of care for cardiovascular disease is by linking primary care with specialist units to improve the community management of illness. An example of this is the management of heart failure, which is a growing problem in the elderly population. However, by linking primary care electronically with specialist units, such as heart failure and blood pressure units, it is possible to standardise the delivery of evidence-based management and reduce hospital referrals and admissions.

Finally, major improvements in the drug treatment of cardiovascular disease can be anticipated in the coming decades. These improvements can only happen if patients are prepared to enter into clinical studies for research, and the Irish public is particularly

good at doing this. The Irish Heart Foundation will again play an important role in ensuring that the public receives the information that allows informed knowledge to guide decisions.

The Irish Heart Foundation continues to be an effective organisation. I would like to thank the Board for its voluntary input and overall guidance. Our volunteers deserve special praise for their continuing support, particularly in an age when volunteerism is declining.

I would like to extend a special welcome to new board members Mr David Pierce, and Ms Sally Anne Kihinan. Their experience and expertise will be put to good use. We said goodbye to three board members during the year. Mr Jack Casey who served for many years on the finance committee and who provided timely advice on business and finance throughout his tenure. We also bid adieu to Dr Mary Cod. Mary worked hard on all aspects of patient care. She was a key player in developing the model for the national audit on stroke care and the Foundation is grateful. And finally, Gabriel Hogan departed after three years service during which the foundation benefited greatly from his advice and experience.

Finally, my thanks to the CEO, Michael O'Shea, and his staff for the professional and effective manner in which they implement the policies of the Board.



Eoin O'Brien
President

Chief Executive's Report

Michael O'Shea

2006 was a busy and important year for the Foundation as we celebrated our 40th anniversary. There were a number of new initiatives during the year. The Task Force Report on sudden cardiac death was published and the government accepted all of its recommendations. The Foundation was invited to sit on the implementation committee and this work is ongoing. My thanks to our Medical Director, Dr. Brian Maurer, who chaired the Task Force, and who continues to be a strong driver on implementation. In this regard our Heartsafe Programme is going from strength to strength. Many organisations achieved accreditation including Rooskey in Co Roscommon, which became Ireland's first Heartsafe village. Edmondston Golf Club also achieved the goal, as did Raphoe Medical Centre in Co. Donegal and two schools in Ballinasloe including Naomh Mhuire and St. Josephs, Garbally.

Our national help line was launched on 23rd January 2006. This service operated on a four-hour basis, three days a week throughout the year. More than half of all calls were in relation to high cholesterol and high blood pressure. This service will be extended to operate on a full-time basis in March 2007.

The Foundation continues to be concerned about the health implications for overweight and obesity in our population. The recommendations outlined in the Obesity Task Force Report (OTFR) have not been implemented and the establishment of the Health Promotion Forum has not happened either. In the European context, the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health was a first attempt to draw together a group of stakeholders including health NGOs, consumer groups, industry associations and political leaders. This is making very slow

progress as the aspirations of the various groups are completely at variance. For NGOs and consumer organisations the desired goals are better regulation of the food and drinks industry, some regulation of unhealthy foods including marketing and advertising (especially to children), consumer information and package labelling, misleading health claims and reformulation of unhealthy food products. The goal of the food and drink industry on the other hand is avoidance of regulation. Rather than commit to reformulation of unhealthy food products, industry tends to fund a range of "education programmes". This trend has been replicated in Ireland with the setting up of the Nutrition and Health Foundation, which is totally funded by the food and drinks industry. The platform is useful in that it promotes the debate about obesity in a very public way. It might be useful if the Irish Government established an Irish Platform to move on the recommendations in the OTFR with strong political leadership.

The Foundation is funding the first-ever national audit of stroke care both in hospital and in the community and this started on 1st March 2006. Three of the six reports were received in 2006. These included the Hospital Organisation audit, the GP survey and the survey on Allied Health Professionals. It is hoped that the final report will be available in September 2007. The Foundation is grateful to many individuals involved in this work including the study group lead by Prof Hannah McGee and Prof. Des O'Neill and also the dedicated individuals from many organisations who form the Foundation's National Stroke Review Committee. The findings from this audit will be a rich source of information for those with responsibility for developing a national stroke strategy. Ultimately stroke patients and their families

will benefit from this work. The Foundation is grateful to Vivian Nathan from Cork, who delivered the 2006 Mick Doyle lecture on his personal experience of stroke. This was a great success and in front of a capacity audience.

Our health promotion programmes in schools, in workplaces and in the communities continued to grow. Our intervention in restaurants and cafes, "Happy Heart Eat Out," was again very effective with over 700 eating establishments taking part. We had a high profile campaign during Irish Heart Week with the theme of "Love Your Heart- Know your Blood Pressure". We are grateful to the Health Service Executive for their support - particularly for our health promotion activities.

The Foundation, as a member of the Medical Research Charities Group (MRCG) was successful in negotiating €1m allocation to be disbursed to charities for research. These funds were distributed through the Health Research Board (HRB) for co-funding of research projects. The Foundation was successful in four of the six projects forwarded for review within this system. These projects totalled €254,000 and the Foundation received €127,000 from the HRB. Our own Scientific Committee awarded grants of €365,307 in total over seventeen projects. This is by far the most money ever allocated by the Scientific Committee in the history of the Foundation.

In 2006 the Foundation continued to support the Cardiomyopathy Group and the Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD) Group. Both of these groups held successful patient information days during the year. In addition the year saw the development of the Sudden Cardiac Death (SCD) (In the Young) Support Group and the Long QT Syndrome Support Group – both are making good progress. The Foundation is delighted to be in a position to help out these groups where necessary.

Our library of information materials continues to grow and 2006 saw the addition of a new stroke booklet and the booklet on heart surgery was revised and updated. In addition we produced new leaflets on SCD, ICDs and Long QT Syndrome.

These are just some of the highlights during 2006 and are not reflective of the day- to- day work carried out by staff in our on going programmes in Health Promotion, Resuscitation, Information, Advocacy and Fundraising. All of this work would not be possible without the goodwill of the public and our volunteers, who continue to support our fundraising and other events. We are grateful for this support.

I would like to thank our voluntary board for their guidance and support. My thanks to our out-going Chairman, Dr Will Fennell for the great energy he put into all Foundation activities over the past three years. I look forward to working closely with his successor Prof. Eoin O'Brien.

Finally my thanks to our wonderful staff, who are keenly dedicated and who work tirelessly - and with not a little humour - to achieve the vital objectives of the Foundation.



Micheal O'Shea
Chief Executive

Medical Director's Report

Dr Brian Maurer

The Medical Directors role is to advise and brief the Board of Directors and the Executive of the Irish Heart Foundation; to coordinate the activities of the Councils; to chair the Medical Committee; to represent the Foundation at outside events when appropriate and to act as spokesperson on matters of interest to the public and the media. By the nature of the post he is involved to a greater or lesser degree in all other Departments and activities. In view of this I will not comment in any detail on those matters, which are covered elsewhere in this report, but confine myself to an overview of the challenges and achievements directly related to cardiovascular medicine during the year.

The devolution of responsibility for policy implementation from the Department of Health and Children (DOHC) to the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the retention of policy formation within the Department has led to some difficulties in rolling out some previously agreed programmes. Delays in allocating responsibility for specific projects within the new structures have led to delays in the allocation of funds. This has had a serious effect on some areas targeted for development under the Cardiovascular Strategy. I will mention just two of these.

The HeartWatch program, targeted at implementing preventative strategies in Primary Care has been at a standstill for two years despite a favourable report on its cost effectiveness. The Steering Committee has been unable to function due to the prolonged failure of the HSE to appoint a representative. As a result it is available to only about 20% of family practises and the aim of devolving secondary prevention from

Hospital to Community has been frustrated. Similar problems, probably related to the changes in responsibility at executive level, have occurred in other areas. I hope that these problems can be resolved rapidly given that two and a half years have passed since the establishment of the HSE.

The second problem is the failure to implement the increase in the number of cardiologists agreed as necessary to provide a standard of service comparable to that in other European countries. We are still some 30 appointments short of the 85 consultant posts needed to provide a cardiologist for every 50,000 people. Even this would still leave us with one of the lowest numbers per capita in the E.U and was recognised as an interim rather than final goal. In the circumstances it is surprising that the existing services have been able to deliver a substantial reduction in waiting times and an increase in turnover in the acute care sector. This has been achieved at the expense of much needed development in areas of prevention, services for patients with chronic illness such as heart failure, rehabilitation etc.

The implementation of the Cardiovascular Strategy should be prioritised by the HSE. The failure to implement government and professionally agreed health policy is deplorable and will be the subject of discussion with all parties involved. To this end it is proposed to hold a national conference to examine progress later in the year. This will be done with participation by the HSE and DOHC and it is to be hoped that an agreed timetable for implementation can be developed.

The development of a National Stroke Strategy is a major goal of the IHF. The Stroke Audit is reported in another section. From the medical perspective the completion and implementation of this strategy is vital. Until this is done stroke victims cannot be provided with best practice albeit newly developed care and treatments, which have been shown to reduce mortality and long-term disability.

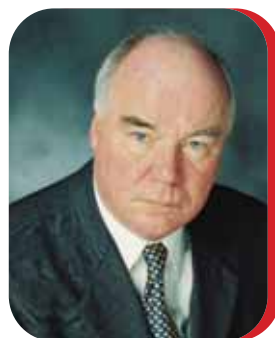
The HSE is now responsible for the implementation of the Sudden Cardiac Death Strategy. The implementation group, chaired by Dr. Siobhan Jennings of the HSE, has been meeting regularly and has made considerable progress. The timetable for effecting many of the recommendations will be met but difficulties with funding may result in some delays. Again given that Government has adopted the report as policy it is our hope that this will not be an issue.

The Foundation continues to support Medical, Nursing and Allied Health Professional education, particularly at postgraduate level. A number of Research grants, bursaries and fellowships to allow individuals in training to pursue the acquisition of skills to be used in Ireland were awarded during the year. Some novel ways of encouraging research and facilitating overseas training or continuing education are being considered, some in partnership with the Irish Cardiac Society, the Pharmaceutical Industry and the Department of Health. The number of meetings organised, supported and attended by our staff increased considerably in 2006 and this trend is likely to continue. Given the rapid expansion in our knowledge of cardiovascular disease and the almost weekly introduction of new, effective therapies, this is a vital part of the Foundation's activities. It is particularly gratifying to participate in and support scientific and educational meetings organised by medical, nursing and other health care professions

and groups. The support groups sponsored by the IHF also provide educational services to patients, relatives, carers and the public.

The Scientific Committee, in some cases in association with the joint Medical Research Charities Group / Health Research Board scheme, awarded research grants of €365,307. I would like to thank the members of this committee, composed of busy and distinguished academics and medical scientists, for their voluntary participation in a rigid and time-consuming peer-review process and evaluation. I would also like to acknowledge the foresight and generosity of Government in funding the joint Medical Research Charities Group / Health Research Board scheme.

Finally I would like to thank all the staff of the Foundation for their unwavering support and their tolerance.



Dr Brian Maurer
Medical Director

Fundraising

Following a difficult year in 2005, fundraising activities returned to 2004 levels of income, with a marked increase in Church gate collections and local activities in Munster and the South East. In addition, the introduction of a sponsored Horse Trek in February created a new and lucrative method of fundraising and the selection of Tanzania for the annual October Overseas Walk attracted 58 sponsored walkers, including 21 new walkers. In 2006 the Foundation celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the Fashion Award programme, enjoyed a fully subscribed Golf Classic in the K-Club and successful partnerships with National Irish Bank and MBNA staff in Sligo.

Happy Heart Weekend

In late 2005, the Foundation commissioned an independent survey of Happy Heart Weekend and its future fundraising potential for the Foundation. The survey included test marketing new methods of fundraising to compensate for the decreased availability of volunteer collectors and creating a new image for marketing purposes. In response, the Foundation introduced a Direct Mail appeal for HHW/end 2006 and the 'Wear Red Day' campaign was postponed to November. The campaign income returned to pre-Tsunami figure.

Following up the survey's recommendations for the campaign, a 3-year development plan was introduced and a dedicated Campaign Manager recruited in November. The task of developing Happy Heart Weekend to an income of €1m by 2009 is a challenge to the Foundation and, particularly, the fundraising team.

Skipathon

Skipathon, the fun way of encouraging school children to take exercise while raising funds for the Irish Heart Foundation, continued to grow in 2006. The introduction of tele-recruitment in Dublin and Cork was very successful resulting in increased registrations and a significant increase in financial returns. The 2006 campaign raised €275,997.

Partnerships

In January 2006, National Irish Bank extended their partnership with the Irish Heart Foundation for a 2nd year with the launch of their Charity Bond scheme. The partnership, which included local Branch fundraising activities and Head Office commitments netted a total two-year income of €98,000 while providing the Foundation with an excellent opportunity to work with NIB Staff and share information of our work.



Overseas Walkers 2006 reach 3,000 metres on Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanzania.

DJ Carey and students of All Saints School NS, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, launching Skipathon 2006

A partnership with the Carrick on Shannon office of MBNA raised €10,000 for the work of the Foundation from a variety of different fundraising activities throughout the year.

Fashion Events for the Foundation

The 10th Anniversary and final IHF Fashion Award programme took place at a Gala Lunch for 400 people in the O'Reilly Hall, UCD on Friday 26th May 2006. Sponsored by BMW, with Grainne Seoige as compere, the event was judged by an eminent panel of Irish fashion designers. The 2006 Award was won by Giordana Giache from Limerick. Going forward on the Fashion front, a new initiative sponsored by BMW and Harvey Nichols Fashion is being finalised for October 2007.

In Dundalk, the 2nd annual Fashion Show organised by our NE Regional Manager, Mairead McMeel, enjoyed success in June.

Christmas Campaigns

The sale of Christmas Cards and ornaments contributed over €43,000 to our funds in 2006, while the annual Raffle was extended once more into new counties and raised €201,000.

Regional Fundraising

While the main focus of activity in the Regions is on Church gate collections, other local events played a significant role in achieving the targeted income. A dance in Gurteen, Co. Sligo, organised by Padraig O'Dowd Transport in aid of his late father raised €5,000, the annual Dublin Tennis Tournament organised by Eddie French raised €32,000. A Walk from Mallon to Mizen in July was organised by Consultant Anaethist, Frank Jennings and his family. Many other local sporting and social events throughout the country contributed generously to the Foundation's work over the past year.



Peter Stringer selling Happy Hearts in Cork



IHF Horse Trekkers in Morocco

Health Promotion

Health Promotion is a key activity of the Irish Heart Foundation and aims to make the healthier choice the easier choice for targeted groups of the population. Our activities are primarily based in the workplace, in schools and in some community areas.

Two national information campaigns supporting the work of the Foundation were particularly strong in 2006.



Dr Brian Maurer, Medical Director, IHF pictured with Dr Alice Stanton, Chair of the IHF Council on Blood Pressure and Prof. Eoin O'Brien, President of the Irish Heart Foundation at the launch of Irish Heart Week 2006.

Ann Scanlon, Workplace Health Promotion Officer, IHF checking actor Tom Hopkins' blood pressure (Christy from Fair City) and Adi Roche, Executive Director of the Children's Chernobyl International project at the launch of Irish Heart Week 2006.

Love your Heart, Know your Blood Pressure

A major highlight for the year was the interest and activity generated by Irish Heart Week. The theme of Irish Heart Week 2006 was "Love your Heart, Know your Blood Pressure". The campaign ran for the week of Monday 25th September to Sunday 1st October and aimed to promote awareness of blood pressure in the adult population and the importance of keeping a healthy blood pressure.

A key message for the Week was to encourage those aged over 35 to have a blood pressure check in the near future, as a first step in reducing risk of heart problems now or later.

A post campaign survey carried out by Lansdowne Market Research in their Omnibus survey showed a good level of recall for blood pressure activity in general, with a 35% recall specifically for the ad for Irish Heart Week. Given the advertising and promotional spend on this campaign, this compares very well to other campaigns of a much higher spend. Sixty per cent felt that the ads prompted them to be more likely to have their blood pressure checked and 67% said they have a greater appreciation of the importance of blood pressure.



Fundraising

Highlights of the campaign

- Over 60,000 magazines were distributed nationwide to HSE, Happy Heart offices, workplaces, pharmacies, GP surgeries, sports and leisure centres and several community outlets.
- Training day and guidelines for monitoring blood pressure to 80 pharmacists, fitness instructors and nurses who check Blood Pressure outside the clinical setting.
- There was a high level of media activity which included seven interviews with national and regional radio and 77 articles on Irish Heart Week appeared in 38 newspapers and 15 magazines.
- Nearly 500 national and local radio ads were broadcast as well as 500 poster advertisements placed on DART and Dublin commuter train lines.
- There were approximately 1,700 hits to different sections on the Irish Heart Foundation website.
- Letters of information were sent to 2,000 General Practitioners co-signed by the Irish College of General Practitioners.
- Members of the Irish Pharmaceutical Union supported the week, many organising specific events within their pharmacies.
- Over 100 workplaces around the country requested materials and many organised health awareness activities and free blood pressure checks. For example Dublin Airport Authority carried out over 700 blood pressure checks of airline passengers and staff in two days.
- A total of 1,500 blood pressure checks were taken in November to support Wear Red Day, at an exhibition in the RDS and at Dunne's Stores supermarkets around the country.
- 400 walks with 10,000 walkers taking part, took place on World Heart Day, Sunday 1st October.
- Approx 500 calls were received from the public on lo-call 1850 364364.
- Information stands and blood pressure checks with Happy Heart groups took place in Cork, Waterford and Carlow reaching approximately 2,000 people.

Happy Heart Eat Out 2006

Happy Heart Eat Out runs for the month of June each year and the theme for 2006 was "Portion Size Matters." It aimed to encourage establishments to offer healthy options and create customer awareness of the healthier eating choice.

- Over 750 establishments took part including restaurants, pubs, hotels and café chains and 188 workplaces.
- Eighty per cent of customers thought it was a good idea to offer smaller portions in dining establishments and 90% of customers thought it was a good idea to offer a lean meat, poultry or fish based dish, that is low in fat and salt.
- Eighty two per cent of workplaces said there was an increase in demand for healthy options during the campaign.

Workplace

Healthy Eating at Work

In 2006, 51 companies were certified or recertified with the Happy Heart at Work Healthy Eating Award.

Health Awareness Days

Seventy six Health Awareness Days were held in various workplaces throughout the country.

Lifestyle Challenge - physical activity programme

In total, the Lifestyle Challenge, which is part funded by the Irish Sports Council, was completed by 2,000 employees in 22 companies during 2006. A total of 41 companies attended Physical Activity Training Workshops in Dublin and Cork.

Information and Advice

A major part of activity supporting the workplace programmes includes ongoing dissemination of literature and information, telephone advice, the provision of information stands and health awareness days.



Pictured is Angela Daly (centre) of Campbell Catering at Boston Scientific, Ballybrit Industrial Estate, Galway receiving the Happy Heart at Work Catering award from Janis Morrissey, Dietitian and Prof. Eoin O'Brien, President, Irish Heart Foundation.

Top right: Eamonn O'Cathain, Martin Dwyer (EuroToques), Model, Pol O'Heanraich (RAI), Eoin McDonnell (Panel of Chefs), Audrey Crone (Panel of Chefs) pictured at the launch of Happy Heart Eat Out 2006 held in The Exchange Restaurant, The Westin Hotel, College Green, Dublin 2

Bottom right: Michael O'Shea, Chief Executive, Irish Heart Foundation pictured at the presentation of prizes at the annual Happy Heart Carlow primary school Art Competition in Carlow with Janet Farrell, Coordinator, Happy Heart Carlow, Phil Lennon, Chairperson, Happy Heart Carlow and competition winners.



Schools

Action for Life is a practical and easy to use educational resource to help teachers teach health related physical activity in the classroom at both primary and secondary school level.

Action for Life Primary

During the year over 1,200 primary teachers were trained to deliver Action for Life in the classroom. An additional 21 tutors to deliver the programme to teachers were trained in January 2006.

Action for Life Secondary

The Department of Education and Science through the Junior Cycle Physical Education Support Service have agreed to work in partnership with the Irish Heart Foundation updating the AFL Secondary School Manual and by year end resources were ready to be tested in 13 secondary schools from January to March 2007.

Bizzy Breaks

Bizzy Breaks is a 10 minute physical activity break for the classroom at primary level. A total of 7,500 sets of Bizzy Breaks have been sent out to primary school teachers and continue to be in demand.

Community

Happy Heart Offices are based in Waterford, Cork and Carlow. Through this network, the IHF works with the community to raise awareness of heart health. Activities include the dissemination of information and organisation of events at local level in support of national campaigns. Apart from Happy Heart Eat Out and Irish Heart Week key events in 2006 included:

Waterford

- Launch of Slí na Sláinte in Waterford Institute of Technology.
- The annual primary schools poster competition with the theme – 'Healthy Lunch for a Happy Heart' attracted over 1,000 entries.

Cork

- Health talks to a wide range of community groups including Fás groups, active retirement and parent groups.
- Information stands, blood pressure checks and health assessment clinics took place in shopping centres, colleges and with community groups.
- Men's health awareness days took place in Farranree and Blackpool.



Sr Siobhán Ryan and Anne Riordan (Irish Heart Foundation, Cork) pictured at the launch of Happy Heart Eat Out in the Farmgate Restaurant, Cork with Chefs Ber Drake and Olive Brennan and owner Kay Harte

Carlow

- Happy Heart Carlow had an information stand at a number of health awareness days in Hackettstown, Tullow and a Women's Health Awareness Night in Carlow Town.
- About 500 entries were received for the annual primary school poster competition.

Health Checks for Leitrim farmers

The Irish Heart Foundation is working in partnership with the HSE North Western Area on a pilot project, conducting heart health checks with farmers in Manorhamilton. Where necessary farmers are referred to their local GP. Many of the farmers never had a health check previously.

National Heart Alliance

- A position paper on the 'Marketing of Unhealthy Foods to Children' has been developed and a second paper entitled 'Physical Activity, Young People and the Environment' is being compiled.
- The National Heart Alliance and Irish Heart Foundation were invited to present to the Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children on the topic of marketing of unhealthy food to children. This created very positive interest and extensive media coverage, including interview on RTE I radio on Ryan Tubridy Show on Friday 7th July.
- Work continued on the impact of the physical environment on young people. A consultation day with a wide range of stakeholders including planners, architects and county councils took place on November 23rd.



World Heart Day 2006 flyer image



Happy Heart 2006 Collectors

Information Report

In 2006 the Irish Heart Foundation launched two new and important activities aimed at improving the information available to the general public, patients and healthcare professionals. In January the Irish Heart Foundation's helpline opened providing direct information and advice to patients and the general public. The telephone number is **1890 432 787**. In March the first national audit of stroke care in Ireland began. This research will provide a clear picture of services available in Ireland to the many people who suffer stroke and who are living with disability following stroke. The results will inform a much-needed national stroke strategy.

The Irish Heart Foundation National Audit of Stroke Care

In association with the Department of Health & Children

On 1st March 2006 the first ever national audit of stroke care began. This study has been made possible with funding from the Irish Heart Foundation in association with the Department of Health and Children. This will be the largest study of stroke ever to take place in Ireland, costing in the region of €600,000.

Approximately 2,000 people die from stroke each year accounting for more deaths than breast cancer, lung cancer and bowel cancer combined. It is the third most common cause of death in Ireland. Up to 10,000 people suffer stroke annually and there are an estimated 30,000 people in the community with residual disability from stroke.

International research has found that Ireland has the worst outcomes for stroke patients in western Europe

and North America, with Irish patients more likely to die within six months than in all 13 other countries. This is of major concern and a top priority for the Irish Heart Foundation is to improve these outcomes. It is planned that the results of the audit will inform a much-needed national strategy on stroke care.

The research is being carried out by a team from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) and Trinity College Dublin (TCD).

The project involves six separate surveys: hospital clinical and organisational audits, and community-based surveys of GPs, allied health professionals (AHPs), patients and carers, and nursing homes. The entire study is scheduled to take 18 months to complete.

The study will provide an important advance in quantifying the preparedness of Irish hospitals for modern stroke treatment, as well as providing a nationwide profile of community stroke services in the Republic of Ireland.

The final reports from the hospital organisational audit and GP survey were delivered on schedule on September 1st 2006. The report of the survey of allied health professionals followed on December 1st 2006.

The three other elements of the study are currently on schedule with final reports due on September 1st 2007.

A summary of the first three parts of the audit and full texts of the three reports is available on the Irish Heart Foundation website, www.irishheart.ie

Irish Heart Foundation Helpline

The Irish Heart Foundation helpline opened in January 2006 on a part-time basis. Heart patients and people with worries about heart health can now talk directly to a nurse and get professional advice about their queries and concerns. The helpline also looks after queries received by email and post. The telephone number is 1890 432 787. Emails can be sent to info@irishheart.ie

Nearly 700 calls were dealt with during the year. Two-thirds of callers were women and 82% were over 46 years of age. The top six queries were in relation to high cholesterol, high blood pressure, medicines, losing weight, heart rhythm problems and stroke. It is planned that the helpline service will be extended in 2007 to five days per week, 10am to 5pm.

Patient Support Groups

The IHF's affiliated patient groups are working to reduce premature death and disability by providing patients with the information they need to help them improve their quality of life. With detailed and up to date knowledge of their conditions, patients can better inform their medical carers and help these professionals make the best treatment choices. By meeting others with similar conditions, patients can share their personal stories and offer practical advice to others. Currently there are four patient support groups affiliated to the Irish Heart Foundation. It is hoped that in time more groups will be set up for people with stroke and other conditions.

Sudden Cardiac Death in the Young Support Group

A support group for parents who have lost children to Sudden Cardiac Death (SCD) was set up in 2006. The Sudden Cardiac Death in the Young Support Group held its first support day on Saturday May 6th in the Clarion IFSC Hotel, Dublin. One hundred people from affected families attended. Those who attended found the day very helpful in terms of both the information and personal support they received. The event generated a lot of publicity and helped raise awareness of the symptoms and causes of SCD. During the year, the support group produced an information leaflet and a newsletter for members with the support of the IHF. The group was actively involved in supporting the work of the Department of Health Task Force on Sudden Cardiac Death, fundraising and exploring opportunities to increase awareness of SCD in Ireland.



Pictured L-R Lucinda McNerney, Chair LOTS Support Group & Mary Vasseghi, Chair SCD in the Young Support Group

Long QT Patient Group

Long QT Syndrome (LQTS) is an inherited heart rhythm problem. People with LQTS can experience fainting spells, palpitations and more serious life-threatening irregular heart rhythms. It is important that people with LQTS understand their condition and symptoms and have their close and extended family members monitored, as the first symptom of LQTS can be sudden death. The support group for people with Long QT Syndrome was set up in 2006. The IHF has been in regular contact with cardiologists and all relevant hospital departments, providing information about the group and asking for assistance in informing patients of the new group. Print materials were produced to draft stage in 2006. The group worked closely with the SCD in the Young Support Group, exploring opportunities to increase awareness of heart rhythm problems, genetics and other risk factors.

Implantable Defibrillator Patient Group

An implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) is a small electrical device that monitors the rhythm of your heartbeat. If it detects an abnormal rhythm (arrhythmia), it acts to restore a normal rhythm. It may deliver a series of electrical impulses to your heart for minor abnormalities (known as pacing), or give an electric shock to remedy more serious or life-threatening arrhythmias. The device is implanted under your skin near your shoulder and connected by electrode leads to the inside of your heart.

ICDs are given to people who have serious arrhythmias due to certain inherited heart conditions, or as a result of having had a heart attack. Sometimes the device is implanted as a precaution if there is a strong family history of arrhythmias or sudden cardiac death. There are at least 1,400 people in Ireland with ICDs and possibly as many as 2,000.

During 2006 an information leaflet on ICDs for patients and families was produced by the support group and distributed to hospitals and patients. The 2006 ICD Patient Day took place on June 16 in the Burlington Hotel. Three hundred and fifty delegates attended. The group published the first edition of its newsletter in December 2006.

Cardiomyopathy Patient Group

Cardiomyopathy is a disease of the heart muscle, which does not allow your heart to pump blood around your body as well as it should. There are two many types of Cardiomyopathy, affecting an estimated 8,000 people in Ireland.

The Cardiomyopathy support group held its annual Dublin information and support day for patients on Saturday 14th October 2006. Speakers included, Dr Ross Murphy, St James's Hospital, Dr Colin McMahon, Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children, Dr Ted Keelan, The Mater Hospital. The group also published a newsletter, Croi Mor, for members.

Conferences

Stroke Study Day

The 9th Annual Stroke Study Day took place on May 26 in the Burlington Hotel. 212 delegates attended the event, highlighting the increased interest in Stroke in the healthcare sector. The Minister for Health & Children opened the event and formally launched the recently produced IHF booklet "A Guide for Those Affected by Stroke and Their Carers".

Irish Angiology Society Conference

The event took place in Dublin on November 3-4. The meeting attracted 70 medical professionals from many different disciplines with an interest in Angiology. Speakers included Prof J Balligand, Belgium, Prof A Zambon, Italy, Dr F Andreotti, Italy, Dr P Syme, Scotland and Dr D Polermans, the Netherlands.

IHF Atherothrombosis Meeting

This event took place in Dublin on November 25th. Keynote speaker was Dr Brian Griffin from the Cleveland Clinic, USA. The meeting attracted over 70 medical professionals

Slí na Sláinte

The development of Slí walking routes continues to be the core programme activity. In 2006 a total of 6 routes were launched, bringing the total in place to 148.

1. Carnew, Co. Wicklow
2. Donadea Forest Park, Co. Kildare
3. Fethard, Co. Tipperary
4. St. Cuthbert's Park, Deansrath
5. Emo, Co. Laois
6. Stradbally, Co. Laois



Top left: Relaunch of Letterkenny Slí na Sláinte

Bottom left: WHD walk 2006 in Mullingar

Right: WHD walk 2006 in Ballyfermot

Slí na Sláinte Maintenance

It is essential that the quality and safety on all Slí na Sláinte routes throughout the country is sustained; this can only be achieved through regular maintenance. In 2006 we continued work with several local authorities and communities, carrying out route audits followed by maintenance where needed.

Slí 2

To complement the route network, Slí 2, a series of motivational signs were introduced in 2001. In 2006, 12 workplaces launched the Slí 2 project in their workplaces, bringing the total number of workplaces who have implemented the programme to 50.

1. REHAB, Sandymount
2. Croom Orthopaedic Hospital, Co. Limerick
3. Wicklow County Council
4. Virginia Health Centre, Co. Cavan
5. Waterford Institute of Technology
6. St. Mary's Hospital, Castleblaney
7. Boston Scientific, Galway
8. Oracle, East Point Business Park, Dublin 3
9. Bristol-Myers Squibb, Mulhuddard
10. Analog, Limerick
11. Boston Scientific, Cork
12. Intel, Leixlip

World Heart Day, October 1st 2006

World Heart Day went from strength to strength in 2006 with almost 400 walks taking place around the country, and almost 10,000 people walking for heart health. World Heart Day walks help to increase awareness of the benefits of walking for heart health and gives communities an opportunity to organise a local event. Primarily a health promotion event, many communities also choose to fundraise for the Irish Heart Foundation. In 2006 over €20,000 was raised.



East Point Park
Virtual Slí na Sláinte



East Point (Oracle) Time to walk sign



Carne, Co. Wicklow route

Training

Continued funding from the Irish Sports Council has ensured that the Slí training has remained a successful programme. Now in its 7th year, Walking Leader Training provides people with the skills necessary to lead walks and motivate others to walk in the community or the workplace. In 2006, 5 Walking Leader Training weekends took place and over 100 participants attended.

In response to requests from a number of HSE regions, the IHF ran a tutor training day to allow for more 'Walking for Health' workshops to be delivered around the country. Held in November 2006, a total of 10 leaders trained to go back into the community and deliver these workshops on behalf of the IHF.

Slí Challenge

Recording Km's walked and submitting the completed cards in return for pins has proven to be an excellent motivational tool for hundreds of people all over the country. Almost 500 people have now received their Silver or Gold Slí pin in recognition of their walking achievements – that's over a quarter of a million Km's walked so far!

In 2006, we worked on developing a new shorter challenge, based on recording time or distance. Supported by Ecco shoes, the new card was launched in early 2007.



Cork walk World Heart Day



Slí Challenge Card

CPR & ECC Training

The Irish Heart Foundation's CPR & ECC Training Programme trained approximately 42,000 people in the Basic Life Support (BLS), Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) and Paediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) programmes throughout 2006. The majority of the training conducted through the programme was provided to members of the general public through the Basic Life Support (BLS) Programme.

ILCOR Guidelines 2005

The International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR) published the new 2005 Resuscitation Guidelines in late November 2005. The guidelines are based strictly on the science consensus reached by physicians, nurses, scientists and researchers from around the world. These guidelines are reviewed every five years and were rolled out across the Irish Heart Foundation's resuscitation training programmes throughout 2006. A major purpose of the new guidelines is to improve survival from cardiac arrest by increasing the numbers of victims of cardiac arrest who receive early, high-quality CPR.

Instructor update sessions were held throughout Ireland in order to bring all instructors up to date with the changes. New training materials including instructor manuals, student texts and training DVDs were introduced and all courses were taught following the new science from 1st July 2006.

HEARTSAFE[™] Community Programme

The Heartsafe Community Programme is an Irish Heart Foundation initiative which aims to provide communities with the information, support and motivation to strengthen the 'Chain of Survival' in their community. The Foundation's resuscitation training programme is focused on the Chain of Survival concept which is based on four links – Early Access, Early CPR, Early Defibrillation and Early Advanced Care. To be certified as a Heartsafe community groups must complete a variety of



Practical update sessions held throughout Ireland update all instructors in the 2005 Guidelines for Resuscitation.

activities which may include CPR training, having written policies/guidelines for emergencies, implementing an AED Responder Programme and conducting heart health initiatives.

There is increasing interest in the Heartsafe Community Programme and the Foundation was pleased to be able to recognise the Parish of Kilglass in Roosky as becoming the first Heartsafe village in July 2006. 60 community members were trained in how to perform CPR and how to use an AED. The organising committee placed seven AEDs around the village at strategic locations including the local doctor's surgery, the school, the church and other sites easily accessible to the community. The committee prepared an ongoing plan for skills renewal for its responders and also plans to introduce further AEDs into the surrounding localities of the Parish. The outstanding leadership of Eunice Langley in implementing this programme is also commended by the Foundation and we hope this initiative leads to other villages throughout Ireland following this example.

Raphoe Medical Centre in Co Donegal became the first Heartsafe Healthcare Facility recognised by the programme. The Centre has trained practice staff in

CPR, has a certified BLS instructor within the Centre, an AED responder programme on site with written protocols for emergencies and a number of health programmes within the Centre.

Ballyshannon Leisure Centre in Ballyshannon, Co Donegal has been certified as being a Heartsafe Workplace. The leisure centre has an AED responder on site, has trained staff in CPR, emergency protocols, heart health initiatives and a plan for ongoing activities.

St Joseph's College, Garbally and Ardscoil Mhuire both in Ballinasloe, Co Galway were certified as Ireland's first Heartsafe Schools in December 2006. The schools both have AEDs onsite, written policies for emergencies, ongoing CPR training programmes for transition year students, staff trained in CPR and the use of the AED and have introduced excellent heart health initiatives into both schools.

There are a variety of villages, towns, workplaces and communities working towards certification and the Foundation would like to thank all those who have taken interest in this community initiative and we look forward to certifying many more communities with the Heartsafe Community Award in 2007.



Students from Ardscoil Mhuire in Ballinasloe receiving their award for becoming a Heartsafe School in December 2006.

Trained AED Responders of the Parish of Kilglass in Roosky receiving their award for becoming the first Heartsafe Village in Ireland.



Task Force on Sudden Cardiac Death

The Report of the Task Force on Sudden Cardiac Death was published in early March 2006. Members of the Irish Heart Foundation are participating on Task Force Sub-Groups that were established to implement these recommendations and it is hoped that this may facilitate increased survival rates from sudden cardiac arrests occurring in the community.

Basic Life Support (BLS)

There has been a significant increase in the awareness and interest in resuscitation training during 2006. There has also been a considerable growth in the number of AED responder programmes being established in communities throughout Ireland and this has resulted in an increase in the number of people trained in the CPR for Family & Friends and Heartsaver AED courses.

A pilot Heartsaver Instructor Course was run in November 2006 and this course was then rolled out into the CPR & ECC training programme. Unlike the BLS Instructor Course which certifies instructors to teach both laypeople and healthcare providers, the Heartsaver Instructor course certifies instructors to teach laypeople only. The Heartsaver Instructor course aims to facilitate the growing number of AED Responder Programmes which require resuscitation training courses for members of the general public rather than Healthcare Professionals.

Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS)

The ACLS Programme has 33 Training Sites providing Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) Courses. The ACLS Provider Course is designed for healthcare professionals who either direct or participate in the resuscitation of a patient. During 2006 117 ACLS Provider Courses were conducted throughout Ireland teaching over 2,000 ACLS providers.

PALS

A Paediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) Instructor course was conducted in October 2006 with the assistance of Cavan General Hospital and representatives from the American Heart Association. This course followed the new resuscitation guidelines and also updated current PALS Instructors in the science behind the new guidelines. The increased number of PALS Instructors has already resulted in more PALS courses being planned in the near future.



Instructor Candidates practice their skills at the PALS Instructor Course held in Cavan.

Statement of Financial Activities

for the year ended 31 December 2006

	2006 €	2005 €
Income		
Happy Heart Weekend	431,037	342,910
Walks	335,179	188,467
Regional Managers' fundraising	921,781	600,150
Skipathon	275,997	215,511
Bequests	1,155,216	1,379,531
Slí na Sláinte income	143,808	131,038
Health Promotion income	156,000	166,073
Department of Health contribution	113,000	114,000
Other income	1,400,390	1,492,771
	4,932,408	4,630,451
Expenditure		
Happy Heart Weekend	(178,389)	(131,209)
Walks	(209,664)	(132,889)
Health Promotion	(1,649,081)	(1,098,694)
Central administration	(733,723)	(701,074)
Regional organisation	(608,038)	(469,129)
Skipathon	(138,596)	(118,493)
Research expenditure	(365,307)	(199,608)
Slí na Sláinte expenditure	(116,227)	(78,437)
Other expenses	(678,707)	(594,712)
	(4,677,732)	(3,524,245)
Surplus for the year	254,676	1,106,206
Other recognised gains and losses		
Unrealised gains on fixed asset investments	288,947	152,609
Realised gains on disposal of fixed asset investments	294,807	201,214
Actuarial loss recognised in the pension scheme	(48,000)	(8,000)
Total recognised gains and losses for the year	790,430	1,452,029



On behalf of the board

D. Pierce
Director



B. Griffin
Director

Commentary on Financial Statements

General Comment

The results for the year to 31st December 2006 showed a surplus of €254,676 compared to a surplus of €1,106,206 in the previous year.

The main elements are as follows :

Income

Overall income increased by 6.5% from €4,630,451 in 2005 to €4,932,408 in 2006.

Income from our local events and well established annual fundraising activities improved considerably , income in 2005 had been adversely impacted by the response to exceptional international events and disasters. Our Church gate collections , our Happy Heart Weekend and Skipathon events increased by 41% from €1,158,571 in 2005 to €1,628,815 in 2006. We are very dependant on the commitment of our large number of volunteers and are conscious of the effects of our regional organisations and of the importance to the Foundation of the local element of our fundraising activities. Fundraising is a very challenging area and a committee has been formed to look at new ways of generating income.

Bequest income decreased from €1,379,531 in 2005 to €1,155,216 in 2006, underlining both the importance and volatility of this source of income to the Foundation. We are looking at ways to create more awareness of the Foundation in order to raise more money from bequests.

Expenditure

Overall expenditure increased by 33% from €3,524,245 in 2005 to €4,677,732 in 2006.

Expenditure on health promotion activities increased by 50% from €1,098,694 in 2005 to €1,649,081 in 2006, due to the expansion of existing programmes and the commissioning of the first ever national audit of stroke services in Ireland.

The balance sheet indicates that we have sufficient resources to implement our future plans.

Overall I am pleased to report that the financial position of the Foundation remains strong.

David Pierce
Chairman
Finance Committee

Irish Heart Foundation 2006

Patron: Mary McAleese, President of Ireland

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Women & Heart Disease
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