

Ireland-Northern Ireland-National Cancer Institute

CANCER Consortium

A periodic update of progress and events

Major Initiatives of the Ireland- Northern Ireland-NCI Cancer Consortium

- Education and exchange of medical, nursing, and scientific scholars
- Enhancement of clinical trials infrastructure
- Teleconferencing to facilitate education and dialogue
- Consolidation of cancer registry data
- Improvement in clinical services for cancer patients

Visit our Web site at
www.allirelandnci.org



Department of Health and Children
Ireland



Department of Health,
Social Services & Public Safety
Northern Ireland



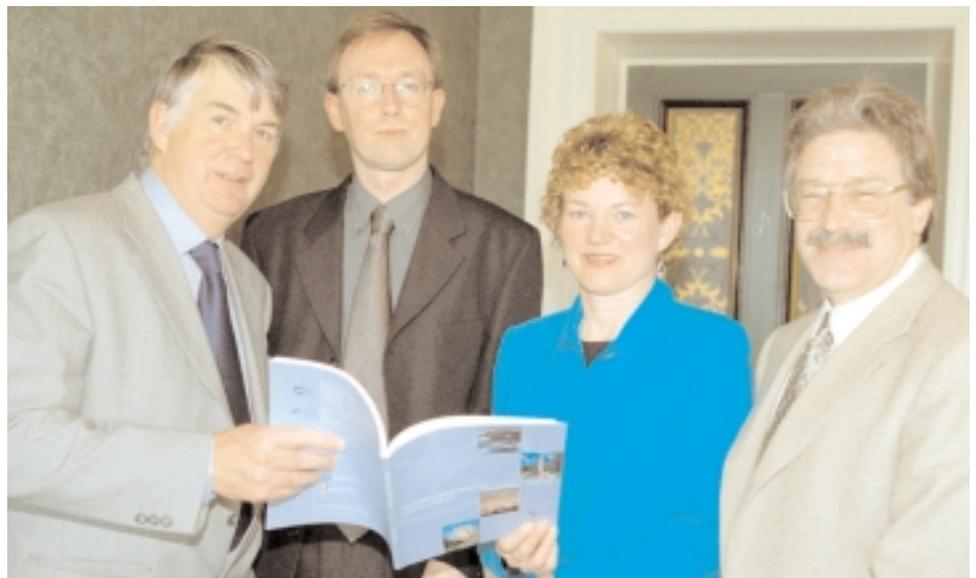
Department of Health and
Human Services
United States

Health Ministers of Ireland and Northern Ireland Announce the First All-Ireland Cancer Statistics Report

In May 2001, health ministers Micheál Martin, of Ireland, and Bairbre de Brún, of Northern Ireland, met in Dublin with top health officials of their countries and the United States to announce publication of the first All-Ireland Cancer Statistics Report. The report is a joint effort of the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry and the National Cancer Registry of Ireland documenting cancer rates, trends, and outcomes on the entire island of Ireland.

The report was sponsored by the Ireland-Northern Ireland-National Cancer Institute Cancer Consortium, a tri-partite alliance of the health departments of Ireland, Northern

Ireland, and the United States. It is the first joint product to be delivered by the Consortium, which is also supporting professional training, research, and technology improvements in the battle against cancer. (For more on the Consortium, see inside.) The joint effort of the two cancer registries to study cancer demographics and statistics on an all-island basis will provide valuable baseline information for researchers and health care professionals in cancer prevention, research, treatment, and care on the island. *(The full report is available at www.allirelandnci.org or by contacting either Registry.)* ■



Key participants at the press briefing for the release of the All-Ireland Cancer Statistics Report are (left to right) Dr. Harry Comber, National Cancer Registry, Ireland; Dr. Paul Walsh, National Cancer Registry, Ireland; Dr. Anna Gavin, Northern Ireland Cancer Registry; and Dr. Richard Klausner, National Cancer Institute, United States.

Message from the Directors

*Enthusiasm sustained
in year of planning, progress*

Remarkable things can happen when people work together. Building upon the enthusiasm generated during the NCI-All Ireland Cancer Conference, in October 1999, the Ireland-Northern Ireland-National Cancer Institute Cancer Consortium has made much progress toward developing joint programmes in scholar exchange, cancer registries, information technology sharing, and clinical trials to advance cancer research and care on the island of Ireland.

This unique alliance reaches deep into the cancer communities of all three jurisdictions to bring together the best resources, systems, technology, and ideas. Our hope, as these programmes take shape, is to involve more and more of our countries' cancer experts, students, educators, politicians, and others in the process of enhancing cancer research on the island.

We look forward to further success and increased collaboration in the years ahead.

James Kiely

Dr. James Kiely
Ireland

Henrietta Campbell

Dr. Henrietta Campbell
Northern Ireland

Richard Klausner

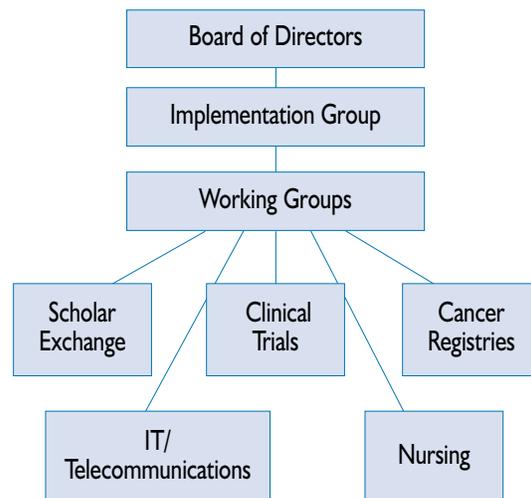
Dr. Richard Klausner
United States

Look for updates and opportunities for involvement in future issues of this newsletter and at www.allirelandnci.org. ■

How the Consortium Works

The Consortium began as a small governing group of health officials tasked with implementing the objectives in the Memorandum of Understanding between three governments. It has grown to a collaborative group of diverse health care professionals, researchers, administrators, and technicians from all cancer communities. The Board of Directors meets twice a year with chairmanship rotating annually between the Chief Medical Officers of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The Implementation Group brings recommendations forward to the board. Ad hoc working groups are established to develop recommendations for specific initiatives. ■

Ireland-Northern Ireland-National Cancer Institute
Cancer Consortium



Members of the Board of Directors (left to right): Dr. Richard Klausner, Director, National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, Maryland, U.S.A.; Dr. James Kiely, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health and Children, Dublin, Ireland; Dr. Henrietta Campbell, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety, Belfast Northern Ireland.

Members of the Implementation Group

Ireland

Dr. Ruth Barrington, Chief Executive, Health Research Board, Dublin

Dr. Peter Daly, Associate Professor, Medical Oncology, Trinity College, St. James's Hospital, Dublin

Mr. Michael Lyons, Chief Executive, East Coast Area Health Board, Bray, County Wicklow

Ms. Peta Taaffe, Chief Nursing Officer, Department of Health and Children, Dublin

Northern Ireland

Professor Bert Rima, Assistant Director, Research and Development Office, Belfast

Ms. Judith Hill, Chief Nursing Officer, Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety, Belfast

Dr. Patrick Johnston, Director, Cancer Research Centre, Queen's University of Belfast, Belfast City Hospital

Mr. Raymond McMillen, Project Manager, The Campbell Commissioning Project, Belfast

U.S. National Cancer Institute

Dr. Carmen Allegra, Vice Deputy Director for Extramural Science, NCI

Dr. Gregory Curt, Clinical Director, NCI

Ms. MaryAnn Guerra, Deputy Director for Management, NCI Chair

Working Group Areas: Key Contacts

Cancer Registries

Dr. Harry Comber, Director, National Cancer Registry, Ireland, Cork

Dr. Anna Gavin, Director, Northern Ireland Cancer Registry, Belfast

Dr. Brenda Edwards, Associate Director, Surveillance Research Program, NCI

Information Technology

Dr. Donal Hollywood, Consultant, Clinical Oncologist, St. Luke's Hospital, Dublin

Mr. Desmond O'Loan, Information Technology Manager, Belfast City Hospital Trust, Belfast

Mr. Douglas Hageman, Chief, Office of Clinical Informatics, NCI

Clinical Trials

Dr. Ruth Barrington, Chief Executive, Health Research Board, Dublin

Professor Bert Rima, Assistant Director, Research and Development Office, Belfast

Dr. Carmen Allegra, Vice Deputy Director for Extramural Science, NCI

Scholar Exchange

Dr. Peter Daly, Associate Professor, Medical Oncology, Trinity College, St. James's Hospital, Dublin

Dr. Patrick Johnston, Director, Cancer Research Centre, Queen's Hospital of Belfast, Belfast City Hospital

Dr. Gregory Curt, Clinical Director, NCI

Nursing

Ms. Peta Taaffe, Chief Nursing Officer, Department of Health and Children, Dublin

Ms. Judith Hill, Chief Nursing Officer, Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety, Belfast

Ms. Joyce Stocker, Nursing Supervisor, Navy Medical Oncology Branch, NCI

NCI-All Ireland Cancer Conference Launches Cancer Consortium

In October 1999, 600 oncologists, nurses, scientists, and government health officials from Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the United States convened in Belfast, Northern Ireland for a 3-day conference that launched the Ireland-Northern Ireland-NCI Cancer Consortium. The conference opened with the signing of an historic agreement between the Departments of Health in Ireland and Northern Ireland and the U.S. National Cancer Institute at Stormont Parliament Buildings where political representatives and conference attendees gathered to witness the event. The agreement forges a strategic alliance between the three jurisdictions to improve clinical cancer services and patient care on the island of Ireland and to foster joint collaboration in cancer research and development. At the close of the conference, three working groups met to develop cross-border initiatives in the three areas identified for cooperation: Cancer Registries and Epidemiology, Scholar Exchange/ Training, and Informatics and Telecommunications. ■



The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding. See page 6 for legend.

Coming in 2002...the second NCI-All Ireland Cancer Conference in Ireland

What Has Happened Since the Conference?

Consortium Awards Two Fellowships in Cancer Epidemiology

The Consortium awarded its first fellowships under the Scholar Exchange programme to Dr. Peter McCarron, of Northern Ireland, and Dr. Paul Walsh, of Ireland. Both scholars began their 3-year fellowships in cancer epidemiology in January 2001, after competing among more than 40 applicants from Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Drs. McCarron and Walsh will spend their first year as fellows at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Maryland, where they will develop their research proposals for all-island studies that they will initiate when they return to their home countries. ■

Shared Technology to Support Coordinated Clinical Trials, Training

Enhancements to the island's informatics infrastructure are being made to support coordinated clinical trials and facilitate cross-border learning and education with the National Cancer Institute. Belfast City Hospital is equipped and staff trained in the National Cancer Institute's net-Trials™ system to provide a uniform system for recording and analysing patient information in all-island clinical trials. Installation of NCI's TELESYNERGY™ medical imaging workstation has begun at St. Luke's Hospital, Dublin. This system enables remote consultations

and provides "virtual" training opportunities without the constraints of time and travel. ■

Web Site and Help Desk Serve Up Training Opportunities and More

The Consortium's new Web site is a wealth of information on major initiatives, news, and events. Nurses, oncologists, students, and other cancer personnel can learn about training and education programmes available through the Consortium, and access the Consortium's Help Desk to be connected to the right programme administrators. The Web site also contains download-able documents, such as the recent *All-Ireland Cancer Statistics Report*, video footage, future meetings and events, and access to current and accurate cancer information for the general public from NCI. (www.allirelandnci.org) ■

All-Ireland Cancer Statistics Report Published

The Northern Ireland Cancer Registry and the National Cancer Registry of Ireland have joined forces to identify geographic and population differences in cancer patterns and to study possible links between cancer incidence and occupations, the environment and lifestyle influences throughout the island of Ireland. (See story, page 1.) ■

Summer Training in Cancer Prevention

Ten scholars from Ireland and Northern Ireland will attend the NCI Summer Curriculum in Cancer Prevention, a 5-week programme from 9 July through 10 August, 2001. The course includes principles and practices of cancer prevention, control, and molecular prevention. The course is open to physicians, nurses, geneticists, and others with an interest in cancer prevention and control. Seventy applications were submitted – 47 from Ireland and 23 from Northern Ireland – for the 10 slots sponsored by the Consortium and funded by home jurisdictions.

Call for Proposals in Ireland for Clinical Trial Centres

In May 2001, the Health Research Board issued a call for proposals from hospitals in Ireland already treating cancer patients for the development of clinical trials centres. Selected clinical trials cancer centres will form an all-island cooperative group, coordinated by the Irish Clinical Oncology Research Group (ICORG), strengthened and reorganised to fulfill this function with offices in Dublin and Belfast. The network is being modeled after the NCI Cooperative Clinical Trials Group, which conducts trials in the United States from multiple locations. The cancer centres will utilise the NCI-developed automated Clinical Trials Information System - called net-Trials™ - to provide a uniform system for recording and analysing patient information in the trials. Working as a co-operative, the various centres will form the critical mass for trials and provide the scientific and data analysis essential to the conduct of high-quality trials.

Physician and Nursing Delegations Visit the National Cancer Institute

Two delegations of health care professionals from Ireland and Northern Ireland visited the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Maryland in recent months to develop scholar exchange and clinical trials programmes. Both visits involved intensive meetings and helped considerably to increase understanding and move initiatives of the Consortium forward.

In September 2000, a group of seven physicians and officials spent 5 days at the NCI, meeting with dozens of scientists to discuss the mechanics of establishing an All-Ireland Clinical Trials group, establishment of a Scholar Exchange programme between NCI and institutions in Ireland and Northern Ireland, and cooperative initiatives already underway in the areas of training, cancer registries, and IT/telecommunications.

In January 2001, a delegation of six nurses from Ireland and Northern Ireland spent 4 days meeting with NCI nurses and scientists to discuss development of education and training exchange opportunities in the field of oncology nursing. This delegation included the Chief Nursing Officers from Ireland and Northern Ireland and nursing education representatives from universities with nursing programmes. ■



Clinical Delegation, September 2000
Standing: Dr. John Gallin, NIH Clinical Center Director, USA; Dr. Ruth Barrington, Chief Executive, Health Research Board, Ireland; Prof. Ingrid Allen, Director, Research and Development Office, N. Ireland; Dr. Seamus McAleer,

Coordinator of Clinical Trials Unit, Belfast City Hospital; Dr. Peter Daly, Trinity College, St. James's Hospital, Dublin; *Seated:* Dr. Brian Moulton, Irish Clinical Oncology Research Group (ICORG); Dr. John P. Crown, Chairman, ICORG; Dr. Patrick Johnston, Director, Cancer Research Centre, Queen's University, Belfast, Belfast City Hospital.



Nursing Delegation, January 2001
Standing: Eileen Furlong, University College Dublin; Marie Glackin, Queen's University, Belfast; Hugh McKenna, University of Ulster; Joy Wiszneaukas, NCI; Cecily Begley, University of Dublin-Trinity College; Dianne Reeves, NCI; Annette Wysocki, NIH; Georgie Gusack, Clinical Center, NIH. *Seated:* Judith Hill, Chief Nursing Officer, N. Ireland; MaryAnn Guerra, Deputy Director for Management, NCI; Peta Taaffe, Chief Nursing Officer, Ireland.

“STRENGTH from Unity”



U.S. Senator Connie Mack (Florida), center, and NCI Director Dr. Richard Klausner, right, congratulate Massachusetts' artist Eleanor Appleyard at the opening of the art exhibit *Strength from Unity* at the Russell U.S. Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C., in April 2000.

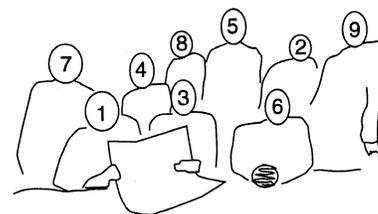
Art Exhibit Travels from Belfast to Washington to Dublin

Strength from Unity: Expressions on Cancer from the Island of Ireland and the United States, is a collection of paintings, photographs, tapestries, and poems by artists from Northern Ireland, Ireland, and the United States whose lives have been touched by cancer. The art exhibit was originally displayed at Waterfront Hall in Belfast as part of the NCI-All Ireland Cancer Conference in October 1999. The exhibit went on tour after the conference to highlight the importance of an international dialogue in the fight against cancer. United States venues included the U.S. Senate, the National Institutes of Health, and a partial showing at the Irish Ambassador's residence. After its U.S. tour, the exhibit moves to Dublin where it will be on view 26 June to 6 July 2001 at the Bank of Ireland Arts Centre. The exhibit can be viewed at www.allirelandnci.org under “art exhibit.”

What's next?

With key organisational structures in place, the Consortium is moving ahead with several initiatives:

- Providing training opportunities to cancer personnel through the scholar exchange programme
- Collaborating on collection and data management between registries in Ireland and Northern Ireland
- Developing capacity for cancer centres in Ireland to enable increased opportunities for clinical trials research
- Implementating new technologies at hospitals and cancer centres in the North and South
- Expanding awareness of the Consortium's activities
- Planning for the Consortium's second NCI All-Ireland Cancer conference to be held in 2002.



Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (pg. 3)

For Ireland

- 1) Mr. Brian Cowan, T.D., Former Minister of Health and Children
- 2) Dr. James Kiely, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health and Children

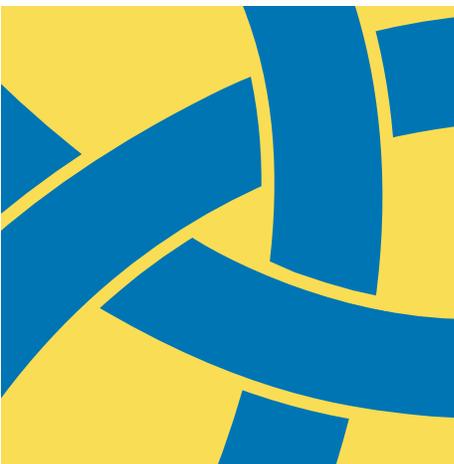
For Northern Ireland

- 3) Mr. George Howarth, M.P., Former Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Northern Ireland Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

- 4) Dr. Henrietta Campbell, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health and Social Services

For the United States

- 5) Dr. Harold Varmus, Former Director, National Institutes of Health
- 6) Dr. Richard Klausner, Director, National Cancer Institute (NCI)
- 7) Dr. Edison Liu, Former Director, Division of Clinical Sciences, NCI
- 8) The Hon. George Mitchell, former U.S. Senate Majority Leader and honorary chancellor of Queen's University, Belfast
- 9) The Hon. Connie Mack, former U.S. Senator



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Please direct all communications to the Consortium's Help Desk:

E-mail:
consortium@matthewsgroup.com

Telephone:
(from Ireland/Northern Ireland):
001-301-984-7191 ext. 606

Address:

Ireland-Northern Ireland-NCI
Cancer Consortium
c/o MMG
6101 Executive Boulevard
Suite 300
Rockville, Maryland 20852
U.S.A.

Web site:

www.allirelandnci.org