

Letter from the President

Dear Colleagues

I am delighted to address you, as College President in this, the first of what will be regular updates to members on the activities of the College and other matters which will be of interest. This newsletter presents a great opportunity to keep you informed on the different areas that the College is currently engaged in.

Our specialty and the healthcare sector in general are undergoing great change due to medical advances and of course as a result of the new economic reality the country finds itself in. The College is in a period of intense activity

amid changes in the funding of post graduate training, the requirements of the professional competence schemes and the proposed legislative changes that will impact substantially on all of our practices.

It is crucial at this time of change that as colleagues we come together to ensure the best outcomes for our profession and for the protection and advancement of eye health in Ireland.

I do hope that you enjoy this newsletter. Your comments and suggestions for future issues are most welcome.



With Best Wishes

PATRICIA LOGAN
*President,
Irish College of
Ophthalmologists*



Published by
Irish College of Ophthalmologists
121 St Stephen's Green,
Dublin 2
telephone 01 402 2777
Fax 01 402 2778
ico@rcsi.ie
www.eyedoctors.ie

If you would like to make any suggestions for future issues of the College Newsletter please contact **Siobhan** on 01 402 2777 or ico@rcsi.ie

Current issues for eye doctors

Members of the Public Affairs Committee are continuing to meet with officials from the Department of Health & Children and CORU to discuss the College's concerns regarding the proposed disbandment of the Optician Board.

The information received at a meeting with Mrs Ginie Hanrahan, CEO of CORU was that the ICO will not have a role on the registration body for optometrists once the profession comes within the regulation of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council.

There will be 1-2 doctors on the panel but they will not have a casting vote. The ICO addressed patient safety and other issues at the meeting. The proposed changes to the registration requirements for optometrists will be subject to a consultation process and the College will submit to this.

The Public Relations Committee has prepared a position paper for the discussions. This is a working document and comments and suggested updates to the Eye Care document are welcome from ICO members.

Annual Conference 2012

The 2012 Annual Conference will be a joint meeting with the European Association for the Study of Diabetes, Eye Complications Group (EASDec). The meeting will be held in the RDS, Dublin from 24th to 27th May. The ICO programme will be held on Thursday & Friday, followed by a joint session on Saturday and with the EASDec programme continuing for the remainder of Saturday and Sunday. An informal drinks reception for ICO delegates only will be held on Thursday evening, followed by a welcome reception for ICO delegates, EASDec delegates & industry sponsors on Friday evening. A gala dinner for all delegates will be held on Saturday 26th.

This event will attract approx 200 delegates and presents a real opportunity for raising the profile of the College particularly with regards to the contribution of the ICO in attracting an international conference to Dublin. The joint meeting also has the potential to generate funds for the College and will have no extra cost to the ICO members.

A senior member of EASDec will be invited to give the Annual Mooney Lecture. The Scientific & Yearbook Committee has met recently and is already putting plans in place for the 2012 programme.

The support of the wider College membership is essential to the success of this event and while the running of the meeting into the weekend and the other changes to the traditional structure of the annual conference may not be ideal it is hoped that the attendance will be good. The 2013 meeting will revert to the Wednesday – Friday format.

Peter Eustace Medal



L-R: Prof Peter Ringens, general secretary of EBO, Ms Marie Hickey-Dwyer President Elect, Irish College of Ophthalmologists, Prof Wagih Aclimandos, president of EBO, Prof Gisele Soubrane, recipient of the first Peter Eustace Medal, and Marko Hawlina, ex president of EBO, Dr Denise Curtin, Dean ICO.

The European Board of Ophthalmology has awarded the inaugural Peter Eustace Medal to Prof Gisèle Soubrane for her contribution to education in ophthalmology in Europe. Prof Wagih Aclimandos, President of the EBO, said that the Peter Eustace Medal had been established by the EBO as a token of appreciation of the tireless work of Prof Peter Eustace from Ireland who established the first EBO Diploma examination in Milan in 1995.

The medal was presented at the EBO examination in Paris in May and paying tribute to Prof Soubrane, Prof Aclimandos said that her own contribution to European ophthalmology over many years had made her a worthy recipient of the Peter Eustace Medal.

Prof Eustace was unable to attend the award ceremony in Paris, but he was represented by Miss Marie Hickey-Dwyer who told the audience that he was delighted to have his name associated with such a prestigious award.

Marie said that Prof Eustace, who served as consultant ophthalmic surgeon at the Mater Hospital for over 30 years with a special interest in neuro-ophthalmology, believed passionately in the mission of the EBO.

“He recognised the excellent training ophthalmologists were receiving all over Europe and wanted to put a definitive mark on it for all of them which would be recognised throughout Europe and beyond,” she said.

Invitation from Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind to their National Headquarters and Training Centre

Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind would like to extend an invitation to the Irish College of Ophthalmologists and its members, to visit their National Headquarters and Training Centre on the Model Farm Road in Cork. Taoiseach Enda Kenny T.D. officially opened the redeveloped facility in Cork as the organisation celebrated its 35th earlier this year. In that time the charity has grown, while staying true to its aim of helping blind or vision impaired persons or families of children with autism to achieve mobility and independence.

Our services are available to people throughout the Republic of Ireland, who are blind or vision impaired and include:

- Guide Dog Mobility Training
- Orientation and Mobility Training
 - Long Cane training
- Independent Living Skills Training
 - Home Skills
- The Next Step – A course designed to prepare young adults for college/leaving home

In addition, we offer an Assistance Dog Programme for families of children with autism and in Munster



An Taoiseach Enda Kenny performs the official opening of the redeveloped Guide Dogs for the Blind training facility in Cork watched by Mr Jim Dennehy, President of the Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind who co-founded the organisation in 1976 with the late Mrs Mary Dunlop.

only, we offer a Child Mobility Programme in partnership with the Visiting Teacher Service.

All training takes place here in Cork at our Training Centre and all services are offered free of charge. There is no upper age limit for training with a guide dog.

Should you wish to find out more about the services offered by the organisation, please visit www.guidedogs.ie or call 1850 506 300 and ask to speak with Client Services or you may email info@guidedogs.ie. We would be delighted to provide leaflets for display in your clinics and your direct referrals are welcome.



'Train the Trainers' Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind Style!

Summary of council meeting 3.9.11

The College Council met on Saturday September 3rd and discussed a broad agenda including reports from committee's and the Dean, the ongoing discussions with the Department of Health and CORU and the Professional Competence Scheme.

The Council also discussed the importance of ensuring that all College members, whether working in the public or private sector, are represented within the Council and Committee structure and that a rebalancing, if required, take place.

College members are elected to a three year term on Council and the current members, in addition to the Honorary Officers are; Mr David Keegan, Dr Aideen Hogan, Dr Garry Treacy, Dr Catherine McCrann, Mr Noel Horgan, Mr Philip O Reilly, Mr Paul O'Brien and Dr Margaret Morgan. Philip, Paul & Margaret are the most recent recruits and joined

the Council following this year's annual general meeting in May.

A word of thanks to the Council members whose term came to a close this year; Dr Joanne Kearney and Mr Gerard O'Connor. Joanne also stood down as the Chairperson of the Medical Ophthalmologists Committee after what had been a valuable input into the structuring and activity of that Committee over the past number of years. Dr Catherine McCrann is the new Chair of the Medical Ophthalmologists Committee. Both Gerard and Joanne had considerable journeys to undertake to attend Council and Committee members and that commitment is much appreciated. Nomination papers for the three positions that will be vacated at next year's AGM will be circulated early in the new year and all College members are encouraged to nominate a candidate or to consider standing for election.

Dates for Committee Meetings

Following a brief summer hiatus the committee schedule is back in full swing. The College Council, Medical Ophthalmologists Committee and Scientific & Yearbook Committee all met in early September. Upcoming meetings include:

• Public Affairs Committee	Wednesday September 21st
• Manpower, Education & Research Committee	Saturday October 8th
• Professional Competence Committee	Monday October 10th
• Medical Ophthalmologists Committee	Friday December 2nd
• Council meeting	Saturday December 3rd

The next HST six monthly assessments will take place on Saturday December 3rd, prior to the Council meeting. BST trainees from the RVEEH, St Vincent's Hospital and Sligo General Hospital will be assessed on the morning of Friday December 2nd in the RVEEH. BST trainees from the remaining units will be assessed locally; Limerick & Cork trainees in Limerick on Monday 28th November and the Mater/Galway/ Waterford Rotation on a date to be confirmed.

Montgomery Lecture



Dr. Lloyd Paul Aiello

This year's Montgomery Lecture will be delivered on the evening of **Friday December 2nd** in the RCSI. The lecture will be given by Dr Lloyd Paul Aiello, Professor of Ophthalmology at Harvard Medical School.

Dr. Lloyd Paul Aiello is Director of the William P. Beetham Eye Institute and Investigator and Section Head of the Section of Eye Research at the Joslin Diabetes Center. An ophthalmologist with retinal subspecialty training, Dr. Aiello focuses 80% of his time on scientific research, particularly aimed at determining the biochemistry and molecular mechanisms underlying retinal vascular disorders such as diabetic eye disease and vascular retinal tumours.

Dr. Aiello is also internationally recognized for his leadership roles in diabetic retinopathy clinical trial development and implementation, and he maintains 20% of his time in clinical ophthalmic care of diabetic eye disease and other retinal vascular disorders.

The Royal Academy of Medicine Ophthalmic Section Winter Meeting will also be held on the afternoon of Friday December 2nd.

Courses & Meetings

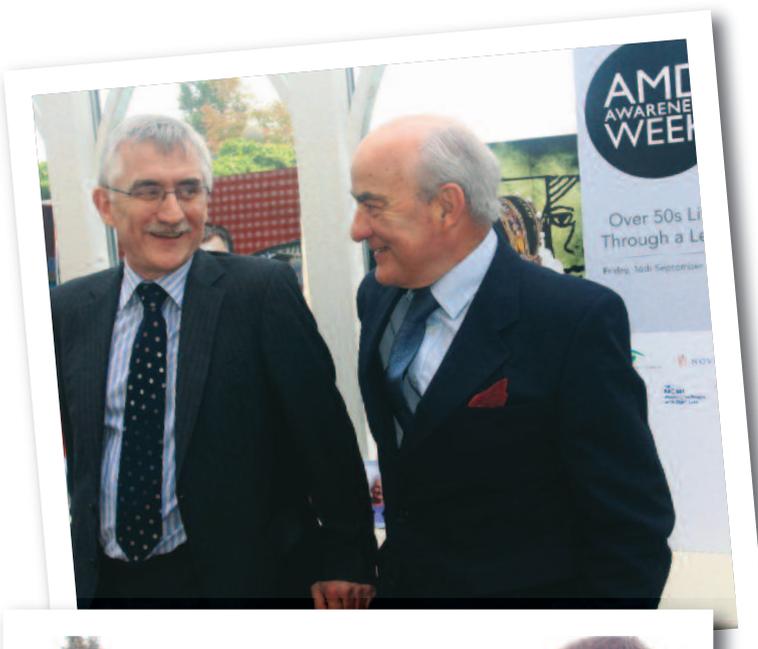


Pictured at the Third Adare Retina Meeting on Thursday September 29th are (L-R) Loretta Callaghan, Novartis, Prof Philip Cleary, Mr Frank Kinsella, Mr Mark Cahill, Miss Marie Hickey Dwyer, Dr Craig Smith, Dr Margaret Morgan & Mr Rob Acheson.

The College is now facilitating a full programme of training courses for NCHDs with funding from the HSE Medical Education & Training Unit. Trainees must attend each of the mandatory courses once during their basic specialist training. Dates and programmes for all events are circulated to all College members who are welcome to attend courses and meetings space allowing. Organised meetings and courses are accredited for external points.

The **Third Annual Adare Retina Meeting** was held in the Adare Manor Golf Club on **Thursday 29th September**. The meeting, organised by Marie Hickey Dwyer was very well attended and the full day programme ran from 9am.

On Friday **November 4th** Prof Conor Murphy and Dr Maureen Hillery are organised a **Refraction Course** in the Royal Victoria Eye & Ear Hospitals. Further details and the programme will be circulated by email and if you would like to attend please email ico@rcsi.ie. The Strabismus Course due to take place on November 18th has been rescheduled to early 2012.



Pictured at the Adare Retina meeting Rob Acheson and Joe O Byrne



Pictured at the Adare Retina meeting Marie Hickey Dyer, Philip Cleary and Craig Smith



Pictured at the Adare Retina meeting Sylvia Jungkim and Caroline Gardiner

NCBI Publishes Major Study into the Cost of Sight Loss



Pictured at the launch of the NCBI's report on the cost of sight loss in Ireland are Minister for Health & Children James Reilly TD, Ms Patricia Logan, President ICO & Ms Loretta Callaghan, Novartis

In 2010, NCBI commissioned Deloitte Access Economics, a world-leading independent economic consulting firm, to conduct a comprehensive study on the burden of vision impairment and blindness to the Republic of Ireland. The number of people living with mild and moderate sight loss, as well as total blindness, is set to rise by 21% in the next 10 years, vision impairment is going to take a huge toll on the health of the Irish population and on our healthcare system unless urgent action is taken.

The economic impact of sight loss has a two main components: direct healthcare costs, which are incurred within the health care system by the Government or other payers as a result of treating these conditions and indirect costs, which include the economic impact of these conditions on wider society outside the health care system, such as the cost of informal care at home.

The total costs of vision impairment to the State found in this report are staggering. The findings highlight a

need for urgent investment into key areas to avoid these rising costs and to ensure the eye health of the nation.

The report also examined the cost effectiveness of three eye health programmes, which would aim to reduce the economic impact of vision impairment: screening for people with diabetes; screening for the elderly; and reducing cataract surgery waiting lists.

Dr. James Reilly, Minister for Health, officially launched the report on Monday 26th September. Summary reports will be sent to all ICO members after that date and full and summary reports will be available on www.ncbi.ie or by phoning 1850 33 43 53.

Speaking at the launch, ICO President Patricia Logan welcomed the report and said that the figures confirm the impact of vision loss on the Irish healthcare system and wider economy and the need for a clear strategy to manage the increasing numbers of patients with sight debilitating conditions.

Academic issues

The postgraduate teaching programme is now running monthly. The meeting takes place on a Thursday afternoon from 5pm in the Royal Victoria Eye & ear Hospital and is broadcast to the peripheral units; Limerick, Galway, Letterkenny, Sligo, Waterford, Cork and the Mater. Attendance is mandatory for trainees and the meeting is accredited for 2 internal CME points for those registered on the Professional competence scheme. The next meeting will be held on October 13th. Further details will be circulated closer to the time and are also available on the College website www.eyedoctors.ie

A pilot group of trainees have begun a trial of the e-logbook under the direction of Prof Sean Tierney, RCSI and Mr Ian Flitcroft. A review meeting will be held in October and it is hoped that it will be rolled out to all NCHDs from January.

From 2012 the European Board of Ophthalmology Diploma will be mandatory to get onto the specialist register for ophthalmology and trainees currently on the Year 4 Registrar Specialty Training Programme in Ophthalmology will take the EBO exam as their exit assessment.

The scoring scheme for the SpR short listing for ophthalmic surgery has been submitted to the ISPTC for approval and it is expected that 2-3 posts will be available in July 2012.

The College is currently discussing a trainee exchange programme with Malta and College representatives have been invited to visit Malta to discuss the programme further.

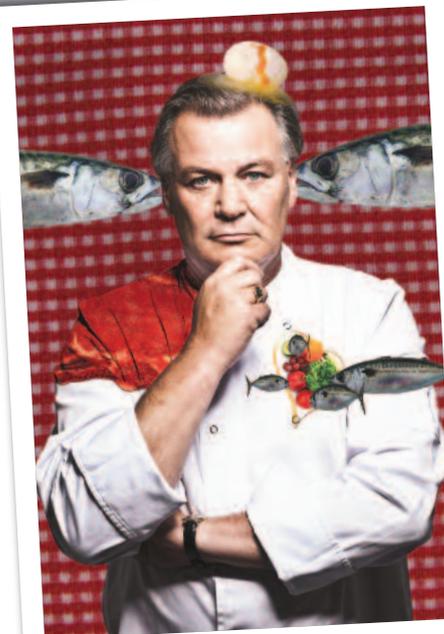
AMD Awareness Week

September 17th to 25th was AMD Awareness Week. College members were very active in their support for activities held to raise public awareness about the condition. A mobile testing unit travelled across the country offering free tests to members of the public. College members staffed the testing units and many of the retinal specialists provided free follow-up consultations for those identified in the testing.

'Over 50s Life Through a Lens'

was a unique photography series showcased during AMD week which aimed to bring the reality of vision impairment to life by reflecting the personal experiences of people with age-related macular degeneration.

The concept by Irish photographer Jason Clarke featured a number of AMD patients and some more well known faces portraying what they would miss most about everyday life if affected by an eye condition such as AMD.



Derry Clark the well know chef



Pictured at the launch of AMD Awareness Week; Loretta Callaghan, Novartis, Siobhan Kelly, ICO, Hilda Barrett, AMD patient, Mary Kennedy, Anna Moran, Fighting Blindness and Elaine Howley, NCBI



Annie Burke an AMD patient

Professional Competence Scheme

Since May 2011 it has been mandatory for all registered medical practitioners to participate in a professional competence scheme. The College's scheme was successfully launched at the Annual Conference and is now fully operational. College members are reminded that if they have not already done so, they should now

enrol on the scheme and record relevant CME activity.

From 2012 medical practitioners will be required to make a declaration to the Medical Council, during the annual re-registration process, that they are participating in an approved professional competence scheme. Guidelines on

the audit requirement for the schemes are currently being prepared with the help of Dr Ian Callanan and will be circulated to members once complete. There are also plans to organise a practical workshop on using the online portal. Further information on the professional competence and the link to the eportal where CME points can be recorded is available on the college website at www.eyedoctors.ie

National Diabetic Retinopathy Screening Programme

In February 2011 the NCSS was formally requested by the HSE National Directorate of Clinical Strategy and Programmes to commence the development of a national diabetic retinopathy screening programme.

The screening model proposed by the NCSS and agreed with the HSE National Directorate of Clinical Strategy and Programmes is one that is largely contract based and reliant on third party service providers. The key programme objectives are:

1. Procurement of digital photography and grading service.
2. Creation of a Programme Database and Evaluation System that will consist of a database that will comprise the eligible screening population, a methodology to keep the data relevant, the functionality to store all requisite clinical data including grading and associated digital images, the capability to manage call, re-call, capacity to generate performance monitoring and audit reports.
3. Development of a comprehensive quality assurance framework and governance structure mirroring the successful models employed with other national screening programmes.
4. Undertaking a baseline assessment and gaps analysis of current treatment capacity for the management of screen detected abnormalities.
5. Development of a comprehensive suite of



communication materials for a target population of 110,000 (and increasing) that will maximise uptake and sustain participation in a national programme to ensure best clinical outcomes for diabetic patients.

Based on experience with other population programmes and a typical requirement for an 18-24 month pre-implementation planning phase a national programme is unlikely to commence before Q2 2012. This estimate is dependent on a number of factors including the recruitment of additional staff, the ability to leverage existing screening programme databases/systems successfully and the outcomes of multiple competitive tender processes, that are due to commence before the end of 2011. Ensuring quality assured outcomes for patients is a fundamental principle for any national screening programme and ultimately the NCSS needs to be satisfied that the

following are in place before a programme can commence:

1. A robust ICT system to capture the flow of data during each screening event is in place and operational.
2. A strong QA governance structure is in place.
3. Risks to patients are minimised.
4. Best clinical outcomes for patients are maximised.
5. Introduction of the screening programme will not adversely affect the symptomatic (diagnostic) service.

The NCSS will be in a better position to estimate a commencement date for a national diabetic retinopathy screening programme in early 2012.

National Cancer Screening Service