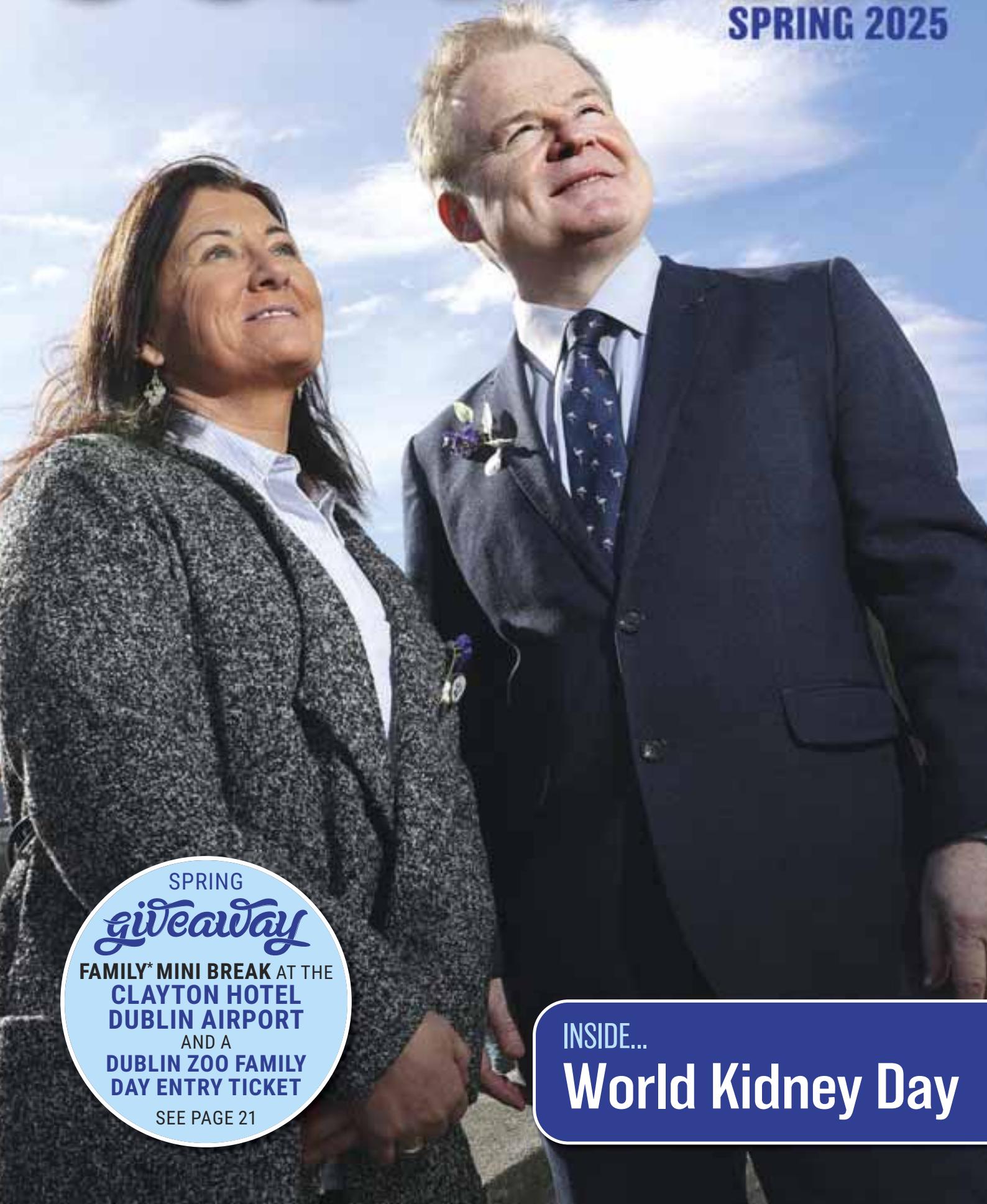


SUPPORT



SPRING 2025



SPRING

giveaway

FAMILY* MINI BREAK AT THE
CLAYTON HOTEL
DUBLIN AIRPORT
AND A
DUBLIN ZOO FAMILY
DAY ENTRY TICKET

SEE PAGE 21

INSIDE...

World Kidney Day

Editorial



Irish Kidney Association CLG

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Welcome to our Spring issue of SUPPORT.

2024 was yet another record-breaking year for the Irish Kidney Association, with even higher levels of support being provided to patients and families. Full details on page 21.

The extreme weather in January and February caused many problems for people with some of our members losing access to water and electricity for days or even weeks. For people travelling to dialysis or doing home dialysis, this caused substantial hardship.

Our Munster Kidney Support Centre and Tralee holiday homes were fully occupied with staff and volunteers working hard to make sure patients were well looked after. We generated significant media coverage highlighting the plight of these patients (see pages 30-33). We will continue to advocate for improved supports for patients in these situations.

The recent effects of this extreme weather also brought into focus the importance of sustainable energy supplies for those medically vulnerable. In this issue, we highlight the new solar panel scheme which involves the free installation of solar panels to people who have been medically registered as vulnerable and are critically dependent on electrically

powered equipment. This includes people who are on home dialysis.

We are currently querying the qualifying criteria as it only applies to people who are registered before November 22nd, 2022. See pages 34-35 and there are more details on our website under the practical information section.

Speaking of which, if you find it difficult to use technology, we highly recommend Age Action Ireland's Getting Started programme. This is a **free** digital literacy programme, helping older people to get online, or use their smart device with confidence. It is run nationwide in libraries and family resource centres. You can contact Age Action to find out about the programme in your locality on 01-4756989 between the hours of 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday.

We are delighted to inform you that we have reached an out-of-court settlement with Beaumont Hospital in respect of the IKA's National Kidney Support Centre. In order to establish a settlement acceptable to us we had to agree to a strict confidentiality clause which is compliant with charity regulations and reporting in our published accounts. We are pleased to announce that this challenging episode has come to a close, allowing us to fully focus on service delivery and continuing to support patients and families.

As mentioned before, it's difficult to provide a specific

FRONT COVER

Alceina O'Brien and Consultant Nephrologist Prof. Austin Stack outside Donor House at Park West for a photocall to announce the IKA's kidney health campaign to mark World Kidney Day, March 13th, 2025

Photo: Robbie Reynolds

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CHARITY REGISTRATION NO. 20011260

timeline for the renovation, but once the contractors begin, we expect the work to take about six months. This will bring the Centre up to modern standards, including rewiring, insulation, ensuite replacements, and general future-proofing.

The planning is already underway, with an architect and project manager engaged.

Initial drawings and costings have been prepared, and the Board has approved the overall budget. A sub-group is overseeing the project, and we're currently seeking quotations. Once quotes are received and approved, the contract will be awarded.

Due to high demand, obtaining quotations has been challenging, and we cannot yet confirm when the work will begin. However, this project is a top priority, and we will keep you updated.

We'll also be seeking your help with fundraising, as your support will be vital to the refurbishment and modernisation of the Centre. Thank you for your continued patience and support.

We ran a significant campaign for World Kidney Day, where we focused on the prevention of end stage kidney disease in line with the global campaign. We also held a very useful webinar on exercise and nutrition. There was plenty of media coverage and it is good to see that awareness of the need to prevent end stage kidney disease is increasing. See pages 4-9 for more



details.

We also drew attention to a major commitment by the HSE in their 2025 service plan to include kidney disease in the Chronic Disease Management Programme run by GPs. After years of campaigning with healthcare professionals, it is very encouraging to see positive change happening, where chronic kidney disease will be identified earlier through screening.

We are so proud of our IKA community as, yet again, you were all out in force collecting in ALDI stores and across a number of other locations (see pages 10-15). We also had a number of high-profile fundraising and awareness events which you can read about inside.

Amidst all our work we continue to focus on future proofing the IKA. We will be getting your feedback on the proposed constitutional changes in face-to-face meetings held around the country which are currently being planned.

We live in a time when kindness

and diplomacy seems to be less valued. Hearing about these terrible wars and reading the details of those conversations and speeches, when facts are ignored, power misused, and money seems to be the only motivation, is worrying.

Here in the IKA community though, every day we are lucky to see the results of the greatest act of human kindness and altruism, the gift of organ donation made possible by brave grieving families and expert, caring healthcare professionals. As a wise person once said, "Always look to the helpers", in these troubled times it will keep us going. The IKA community is one of these helpers. So why not get involved? See pages 38-39 and 44-45 for details of how some patients got involved and how others might like to.

As this is an election year, Branch AGMs must be held by **Wednesday April 16th**. We really encourage you to attend your local Branch AGM, as it is very important your voice is heard and we continue to represent your views. The national AGM will be held on June 14th, (see page 21 for details). We hope to see many of you there.

Finally, we say goodbye to a staff member, many of you will know. **Ashling Hand** is leaving for a new role and we wish her every success. We will have a tribute in our next edition.

Wishing you a happy Springtime.

CAROL MOORE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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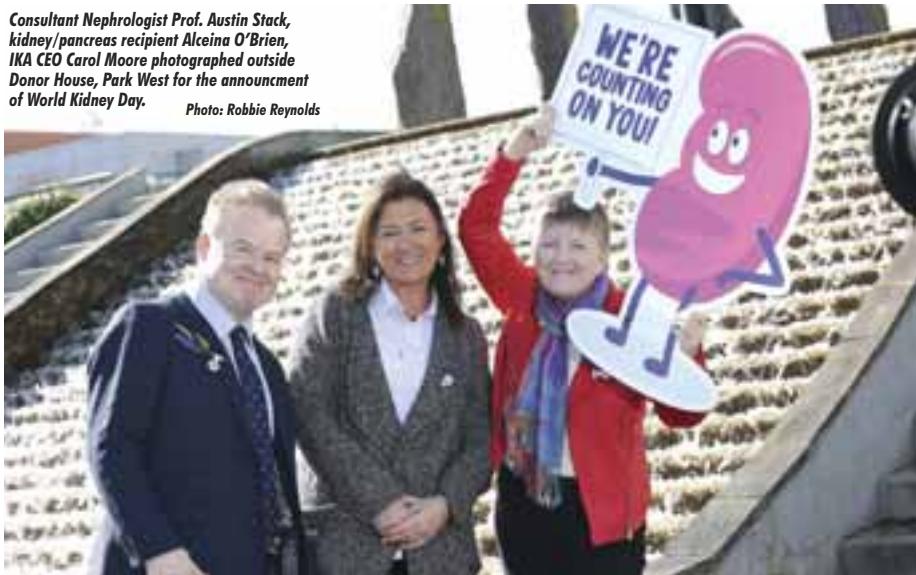
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WORLD KIDNEY DAY

THE ANATOMY OF A CAMPAIGN

Consultant Nephrologist Prof. Austin Stack, kidney/pancreas recipient Alceina O'Brien, IKA CEO Carol Moore photographed outside Donor House, Park West for the announcement of World Kidney Day.

Photo: Robbie Reynolds



This year marked the **20th World Kidney Day**. Organised by the International Society of Nephrology (ISN) and the International Federation of Kidney Foundations (IFKF), this annual campaign (held on the second Thursday in March) focuses on raising awareness about the importance of maintaining healthy kidneys and preventing kidney disease, as well as highlighting the burden of kidney disease and the need for access to quality healthcare for kidney patients.

In recent years, the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) has used World Kidney Day (WKD) as an opportunity to shine a light specifically on the early stages of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD), the risk factors that come with it, and the opportunities that exist for early detection and slowing its progression.

It has been about working towards having CKD being mentioned in the same conversations as the better-known chronic diseases such cardiovascular disease, diabetes and hypertension when it comes to public policy deliberations as well as the public's understanding of where kidney health fits in relation to individual overall health.

Since its establishment in 1978, the Association has been advocating for improvements in how End Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD) is treated, whether it be by dialysis or transplantation. Our work in the area of CKD awareness, in more recent years, is aimed at encouraging early

By COLIN WHITE

identification and treatment with the goal of reducing the number of people developing EKSD and requiring dialysis or a transplant.

CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE

Affecting 1 in 10 of the general population and 1 in 7 of the over 50s and being particularly prevalent amongst people with pre-existing chronic conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and hypertension, amongst others, the stark reality is that, on its current trajectory, CKD will become the fifth leading cause of death internationally by 2040.

STRONGER TOGETHER

To be effective in advocating for change, it is important to develop partnerships, to speak with a combined voice about a shared vision. The Association's work in the area of CKD awareness has offered many opportunities for such partnerships.

Shared WKD projects focused on CKD in recent years, with Diabetes Ireland, Croí and the Irish Heart Foundation, have set the foundation for collaboration in other shared areas of interest including the financial burden of living with a life-long illness.

Their messaging to their own communities, around this World Kidney Day, on the importance of kidney health in the context of their chronic illness during the week of WKD shows the value, and proactive nature of these enduring relationships.

As with all things kidney related, the Association continues to work closely with the National Renal Office of the HSE as it is important that all IKA education materials are medically correct and that they reflect where kidney healthcare is currently at in Ireland.

CKD awareness has also been a motivating force in deepening the working relationship the Association has with the International Society of Nephrology (ISN). Working collaboratively with healthcare professionals is a cornerstone in effective advocacy as a patient organisation as it demonstrates a shared vision between those receiving and delivering healthcare on how it can be improved.

1 in 10 people have Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)





On World Kidney Day itself we hosted a webinar 'My Health, What Can I do?' to share practical advice on what people living with kidney disease can do in relation to managing their own healthcare.

Irene Cronin, a clinical specialist renal dietitian from Cork University Hospital, representing the Renal Interest Group (RIG) of the Irish Nutrition & Dietetic Institute (INDI), shared some very interesting insights into how the approach to the 'renal diet' has changed in recent years. RIG has been a great supporter of the IKA over the years and their website www.irishkidneydiet.ie is a must to visit.

Orlaith Heslin and **Clíona Barret**, two senior renal physiotherapists from Tallaght University Hospital spoke about how renal physiotherapy is developing as a relatively new area in Ireland and they shared plenty of practical advice including a great overview of what is on offer, free of charge, on the Kidney Beam website www.kidneybeam.com

Alceina O'Brien, a kidney and pancreas transplant recipient living in Galway, shared her lived experience and how, working with healthcare professionals, she has gained the confidence to play her role in being proactive in managing her own healthcare.

With 107 registrations for the webinar, there is clearly an appetite for education. Taking the feedback from this webinar into account, we will be looking at planning future education opportunities through collaboration with relevant healthcare professionals.



Alceina O'Brien, Simon Mayhew, Rhianna O'Reilly
Photo: Robbie Reynolds



PHARMACY

Community pharmacies play an important role in the lives of people living with CKD. Given their presence in every community around the country, they also have the ability to facilitate patient and public education about a broad range of healthcare issues.

With nine pharmacy chains coming in behind the IKA's campaign this year, through sharing messaging via the digital screens in their outlets across the country whilst also sharing related messaging through their extensive social

media presence, their partnership has proven invaluable.

The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) continues to be active in their support of the IKA's messaging around CKD. The IPU inserted a World Kidney Day poster in the March edition of their magazine which is circulated to pharmacies throughout Ireland. This magazine also included an article on CKD from two nephrologists in St. James' hospital that we supported.



continued next page...

WORLD KIDNEY DAY contd...

HOSPITALS

Every year, the staff in a growing number of hospitals are stepping up on World Kidney Day (WKD) to put on information stands on kidney disease where their colleagues and the public can learn more about the topic and how kidney health is important in relation to maintaining their overall health.

As an indication of the value of partnership, it is encouraging to report that the Association has been able to support many of the hospitals with education materials for their stands and in many cases, IKA volunteers also stepped in to support their work.

THE LIVED EXPERIENCE

A real strength of the IKA's work in the promotion of awareness around kidney disease and the importance of organ donation for transplantation has been the ability to ground our messaging in the lived experience of people. Having patients, and their families, willing to step forward to share their very personal experiences and insights is what makes the wider messaging relatable.



VOLUNTEERS IN FUNDRAISING ACTION

The IKA community came out in force ahead of World Kidney Day, Saturday, March 8th to raise funds to support our on-going work. The value of this grassroots activity cannot be underestimated in relation to raising funds, it increases awareness of kidney disease and the range of services provided to patients and their families by the IKA.

Hundreds of dedicated volunteers hit the streets across Ireland, showing their unwavering support for the IKA. This incredible day was

made even more special by the enthusiasm of those involved.

The atmosphere on the day was nothing short of amazing. Volunteers were welcomed with open arms, and their collective energy was infectious as they gathered to raise funds for a common cause.

The Irish Kidney Association's outreach on this special day highlighted not just the importance of raising funds but also the need to support kidney patients and promote public awareness about the challenges those living with kidney disease face.

We're pleased to share photos of some of our fabulous volunteers, who made the day such a success (see pages 10-15). Their dedication and generosity have had a lasting impact, and we couldn't be more grateful for their support.

Special thanks goes to ALDI and all the ALDI team for partnering with us for World Kidney Day and treating us so warmly when we were collecting at their stores nationwide.

'WHAT IT SAYS IN THE PAPERS'

The work that goes into crafting a press release is significant to ensure its relevance for the target audience (general public, healthcare professionals, policy makers, etc.) and, when appropriate, there also needs to be an offering of follow-up support such as a relevant interview candidate. It is definitely not a case of one size fits all.

It is also about taking all forms of communication into account.

Using a press monitoring service, we can report a print/online media reach of 7,213,677 views with a value of €204,572 for the content that came out of our World Kidney Day campaign. As part of this World Kidney Day campaign, we have also had people speaking on 15 different radio stations with some content being syndicated to additional stations.

Between the fundraising and awareness campaigns that pivoted around World Kidney Day this year, the Association's social media channels really came into their own with significant engagement at a grassroots level. It is important to use these channels to spread the



wider messaging of a campaign whilst also giving our own community a view of the 'bigger picture' in terms of what is going on nationwide as we have tried to do in this article.

PROGRESS

In October 2023, a report from TILDA and the National Renal Office gave a real insight into the prevalence and impact of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) in Ireland. We were no longer reliant on international reports or obliged to speak in general terms. For the first time, there is now solid researched information that we can use in campaigning.

Further research from the University of Limerick School of Medicine, led by Prof. Austin Stack, was published during the week of World Kidney Day. This research has gone into more detail in identifying the at-risk groups and signposting how efforts in early detection can be focused to have the maximum impact (see opposite page).

The IKA is a member of the Health Promotion Alliance of Ireland (led by the Irish Heart Foundation) and this is an area of significant interest for the group.

The IKA is also a member of the Global Patient Alliance for Kidney Health, and it is through our membership that we became aware of a World Health Organisation resolution ("Reducing the burden of noncommunicable diseases through promotion of kidney health and strengthening prevention and control of kidney disease") that is being brought to the World Health Assembly in

Geneva in May this year.

Information like this is invaluable when it comes to influencing policy makers as it allows us to highlight that CKD is a topic of international interest.

Towards the end of 2024, then Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD, announced plans for the inclusion of CKD in the HSE's Chronic Disease Management programme from July 2025.

This will see CKD included in the planning for the management of chronic diseases in the community and, as such, offers the potential to be a real game changer, seeing a proactive approach to its identification and management.

New medications that have become available in the last two years have made the management



and slowing the progression of CKD a very real possibility.

The Chronic Disease Management programme in Ireland is for people who have a medical card and have a specified chronic disease such as a cardiovascular disease, COPD, asthma and type 2 diabetes. The programme emphasises lifestyle and

medical risk factor control.

The HSE has established an Integrated Care Programme for the Prevention and Management of Chronic Disease to provide better care to people with chronic diseases.

There is a lot happening in the area of CKD and with the relevant organ donation and transplantation sections of the Human Tissue Act due to commence next quarter, there's a busy time ahead.

The Association's work in developing its knowledge base and a broad network of meaningful relationships puts us in a strong position to be part of any conversations in this area going forward.

For more information on the IKA's kidney health awareness campaign visit www.ika.ie/worldkidneyday

New UL research identifies groups at high-risk of CKD



Consultant Nephrologist Prof. Austin Stack

A new study, *'Prevalence and Determinants of Chronic Kidney Disease among Community-dwelling Adults, 50 Years and Older in Ireland'*, by researchers at University of Limerick School of Medicine, was published in the same week as World Kidney Day 2025, in the Clinical Kidney Journal of the European Renal Association.

The largest study of its kind in Ireland, the research explored in detail factors associated with kidney disease using data from the Irish Longitudinal Study on Aging (TILDA).

Among the key findings were:

- the burden of chronic kidney

disease (CKD) was far more common in individuals with common chronic conditions including pre-existing heart disease (33.9%), diabetes (28%), cancer (25.5%), and bladder problems (23.7%).

- CKD is more common in individuals with arthritis, hypertension, obesity and chronic lung conditions with 1 in 5 affected.
- Individuals with hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer were one and a half times more likely to have CKD.
- 1 in 7 individuals suffer from CKD in Ireland (14.7%), age 50 and over.
- 1 in 2 individuals over the age of 75 years suffer from CKD.
- Women were 50% more likely to have CKD than men, a finding that persisted across all age groups.
- Cancer, obesity, and social deprivation contributed to the burden of kidney disease independent of the traditional risk factors.
- Obese individuals were twice as likely to have kidney disease than normal weight individuals.
- 1 in 4 holders of a medical card had evidence of kidney disease

(25.5%) as did individuals who were frequently hospitalised.

Professor Austin Stack, senior author on the study and Director of the National Kidney Disease Surveillance System (NKDSS) at the UL School of Medicine and Consultant Nephrologist, University Hospital Limerick explained,

"These new findings provide an enormous opportunity to the Irish health service to identify and screen these high-risk groups for early signs of kidney damage. Earlier detection of kidney disease will facilitate more timely investigation and treatment, leading to better outcomes."

"There is a real chance that we can stem the tide of kidney failure and improve patient survival. Detecting disease early through an active or passive surveillance system is an effective way of preventing chronic disease, especially if the disease is common, treatable and can be detected with simple screening tests. Chronic kidney disease ticks all these boxes."

"The addition of chronic kidney disease to the Chronic Disease Management Programme of the HSE to begin in July 2025 is a major step forward in improving kidney health in Ireland," Professor Stack added.

CASE STUDY

*Kidney/pancreas transplant recipient
Alceina O'Brien
Photo: Robbie Reynolds*

ALCEINA O'BRIEN

Alceina O'Brien, a retired nurse and mother of one, living in Loughrea, Co. Galway, and previously from Westside in Galway, underwent a kidney and pancreas transplant last year which brought to an end 28 years as a diabetic and five years as a dialysis patient. She shared her story at a webinar, which was organised by the Irish Kidney Association to mark World Kidney Day on Thursday, March 13th March.

The webinar 'My Kidney Health, What Can I Do', began at 7pm, and was aimed at empowering End Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD) patients, with presentations by a renal dietitian from the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI) Renal Interest Group, and renal physiotherapists from University Hospital Tallaght.



My name is Alceina O'Brien and I have been truly blessed to have received a simultaneous kidney and pancreas transplant last year at St. Vincent's University Hospital, Dublin.

My journey began in 1996 when I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. I was in my early twenties and just near the end of my training as a nursing student. I graduated and progressed with my career. After receiving support, education, and altering my lifestyle choices, I qualified with a higher diploma in Midwifery.

I want to encourage others who have diabetes to continue with their dreams and aspirations where possible. I would also like to highlight that diabetes is one of the common

risks for developing chronic kidney disease (CKD) and how important it is to get your kidney function checked as if it is diagnosed early with intervention it is possible to slow down its progression. Organisations including Diabetes Ireland and the Irish Kidney Association offer great support to patients and their families.

I tried to ensure my diabetes didn't hold me back whilst prioritising my health choices, diet, exercise, etc.

I lived with diabetes for 28 years, and over time, my treatment results steadily improved. This sparked my interest in exploring ways to further enhance my health and outcomes.

I took control of my illness, guided by the expertise and dedication of many passionate healthcare

**Photos:
ROBBIE REYNOLDS**

professionals.

It was a challenge at times, but I continued with my nursing career and gave birth to my daughter Rhianna in 2008.

Rhianna, who is 16-years-old now has shared my journey over the years.

I was shocked when I learned at a routine diabetes clinic that my kidney function was failing and that I would need a kidney transplant in the future. When I began dialysis in late 2019, I was full of fear and anxiety regarding my future. As my family members were not suitable to donate their kidney I started attending a haemodialysis unit in Galway city for my treatment.

I didn't want to do it at home as I felt it would cause too much disruption for Rhianna who was just 11-years-old at the time. I wanted home to be home!

I started preparing my work-up for the transplant list with lots of support from renal staff and also the Irish Kidney Association's counselling service.

While on dialysis I felt very restricted. It took up a lot of my time over the week.

My treatment schedule was on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, every week, initially for three hours at a time but later it progressed to four hours being hooked up to a dialysis machine which filtered my blood.

Dialysis was lifesaving but challenging.

Many events with family and friends had to be missed. I was extremely tired. My diet was hard to stick to as I was trying to adhere to both a renal diet and a diabetic diet.

Lisa Fitzgerald, Joint IKA Fundraising Manager, Alceina O'Brien



Simon Maynew, Alceina O'Brien and her daughter Rhianna.

Carbohydrate counting was essential. Controlling blood sugar levels and staying within my fluid allowance was painful for me at times.

My self-image was poor as I cared for my dialysis lines/ports fixed to my upper chest wall. I also had a continuous glucose monitor and insulin pump attached to my abdomen.

My dialysis treatment continued for 5 years. Over that time I had to give up nursing as my health was declining.

Thanks to the wonderful selfless family of a deceased donor I received two amazing new organs last year – a kidney and a pancreas. This has utterly transformed my life.

I no longer have dialysis. I no longer have diabetes.

I do not feel as restricted anymore. I have so much more free time. I can attend my daughter's events. I can enjoy a healthy diet with plenty of choice. I drink lots of water now. I have an abundance of energy.

I look forward to the future. I have gained more confidence. There are no longer any medical devices attached to me. I no longer fear low or high blood sugar levels as in the past this could often lead to hospital admissions.

I have to take anti-rejection medication for life, but I have a new 'gift of life' from a selfless organ donor for which I am extremely grateful.

I want to share my experiences to help and give hope to others experiencing similar journeys.

“

“I look forward to the future. I have gained more confidence. There are no longer any medical devices attached to me. I no longer fear low or high blood sugar levels as in the past this could often lead to hospital admissions.”

IKA Volunteers in ALDI action on World Kidney Day

Ray Scanlon
ALDI Mallow, Cork



Pat O'Sullivan,
ALDI Mallow, Cork



Michael Lucey
ALDI Mallow, Cork



Jerry, Adam O'Sullivan with Ellen Walsh, ALDI Mallow, Cork



Jennifer McDermott
ALDI, Ballybofey
Donegal



Robbie Engand
ALDI Naas,
Kildare



Deirdre Doyle, Sarah McCormack
ALDI Portarlington, Co. Laois



Alceina O'Brien, Michelle Moran
ALDI Athenry,
Galway



Gerry McKenna, Ger O'Donnell, Andreina Perez, IKA CEO Carol
Moore, Jomar Mosquera, ALDI Nutgrove, Dublin



Girley Lugares, Lenny Ryan, Lorna O'Leary
and Bernie Hopper at ALDI Tallaght Cross, Dublin



David Drain
ALDI Nutgrove, Dublin



Glenn Clinton,
Benita Harbourne,
ALDI Nutgrove,
Dublin

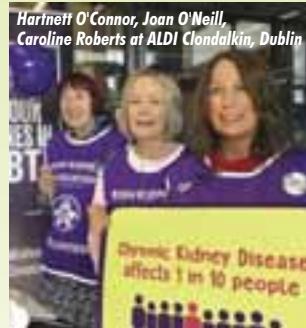


IKA Volunteers in ALDI action on World Kidney Day

Bernard Cronin, Denis Hyland
ALDI Wilton, Cork



Hartnett O'Connor, Joan O'Neill,
Caroline Roberts at ALDI Clondalkin, Dublin



DON'T LEAVE YOUR LOVED ONES IN DOUBT.



DON'T LEAVE YOUR LOVED ONES IN DOUBT.



Declan Redmond, Siobhan Ni Réamoinn, Bryan Duignan, Trevor and June Heron, ALDI Hanover, Carlow



Paul Donohoe, Breda Lynch, Gabija Zemgulyte, ALDI Cavan



Michael and Carmel Fennelly, Henry O'Grady, ALDI Cahir, Tipperary



LIVING WITH KIDNEY FAILURE



Kathleen McTeigue and her granddaughter, Keeva, ALDI, Carrick-on-Shannon, Leitrim



Anneitha & Charles Beirne, ALDI Carrick-on-Shannon, Leitrim



IKA Volunteers in ALDI action on World Kidney Day



IKA Volunteers in ALDI action on World Kidney Day



IKA Volunteers in ALDI action on World Kidney Day

Orla Canning,
Alan Beaton
ALDI Hanover, Carlow



Amber & Elaine O'Rourke
ALDI Hanover,
Carlow



Katie Jenkins,
Eddie Kehoe
ALDI Newtown Rd,
Wexford



Paul Donohoe, PJ Lynch
ALDI Cavan



Maureen Hand, Dermot Hayes
ALDI Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co. Clare



Thomas McLoughlin,
Eddie Kehoe
ALDI Newtown Road, Wexford



Lisa O'Dwyer and her daughter,
ALDI Francis Street, Ennis, Co. Clare.



OUT AND ABOUT ON WORLD KIDNEY DAY



Louise Horgan, Mary Adamson, SuperValu Tipperary.



Helen Barron, SuperValu Tipperary.



Paula Nyhan, SuperValu Tipperary.



Carol Landers, Geraldine Fanning, SuperValu Tipperary.



Anna Ahearn, Maria McMahon SuperValu Tipperary.



Billy & Amber O'Rourke, Caoimhe & Ciara Deering
at Fairgreen Shopping Centre, Carlow.



Bryan Duignan and Alex Loughman at
Fairgreen Shopping Centre, Carlow.



Angie and Trish, the managers of Mohill Family Support
Centre, Canon Donohoe Hall and Breffni FRC.

OUT AND ABOUT ON WORLD KIDNEY DAY



Eimear Coughlan, Karmal Thandavarayan, Aisling Stapleton, Louise Burke, Sani George, Elsa Alex, Alice Curran, Maria Bergstrom, Noreen Galvin, Yvonne O'Neill at Midland Regional Hospital Tullamore.



Karmaleena Thandavarayan, Eimear Coughlan, Jini Jacob, Dr. Elbadri, Dr. Eoin Bergin, Sani George, Alice Curran, Elsa Alex.



Jacinta Conroy, Jini Jacob, Viola Kelly at Midland Regional Hospital Tullamore.



Jini Jacob, Elsa Alex, Karmaleena Thandavarayan at Midland Regional Hospital Tullamore.



Maria Geraghty, Tony Canavan, Lorna Durack, Galway University Hospital.



Joe Moynihan, Ray Halligan, Waterford IKA Branch at South East Technological University.



Lisa Fitzgerald, Dr. John Holian St. Vincent's Hospital, Dublin.



Anna Keating, Aileen O'Brien, Joann Lyons, Sheena McDonagh, Margo McCarthy, Prof. Liam Plant (behind), Pat O'Sullivan at Cork University Hospital.



Fiona Tobin, Cathriona Culleton in University Hospital Waterford.



Frances Moynihan, Michael Gallwey University Hospital Waterford



Alison Fogarty McCarthy (centre) meeting staff at Beaumont Hospital stand for World Kidney Day. (l-r): Reiltin McParland, Maria Greene, Sandra Flanigan, Trish Murtagh, Laura Austin, Alison, Elizabeth McGinn, Annette Butler, Orla Kearney, Dr. Carol Traynor



Staff and patients promoting WKD in Cavan General Hospital, (back): Teresa Higgins, Olivia McCormick, Donna Johnson, Ciara Leddy, Dr Kilghe, Paul Donohoe (IKA Cavan/Monaghan Branch); (front): Gabija Zemgulyte, Pauline Connolly, Laura Dillon, Eimear Doherty.



Marion Young, Derry O'Farrell in University Hospital Waterford.

Tipp Transplant woman's Twilight Tribute

A Tipperary woman marked the first anniversary of her life-changing kidney transplant on World Kidney Day in a powerful and symbolic way - by completing an eight-day 180km journey on foot from her hometown, Tipperary to the 'Circle of Life' monument for organ donors at Beaumont Hospital in Dublin, the hospital where she received her transplant.

Alison Fogarty McCarthy's journey, representing her struggle since she was 10 years-old, when she was diagnosed with an autoimmune disorder Bartter's Syndrome that led to kidney failure, concluded with an emotional homecoming at the Rock of Cashel at twilight. The historic Rock was illuminated in purple, the Irish Kidney Association's signature colour, in honour of her kidney donor.

By CWEN O'DONOGHUE

Surrounded by family, friends, and supporters including members of the Tipperary Branch of the Irish Kidney Association (IKA), Alison delivered a heartfelt speech reflecting on her lifelong battle and the profound gratitude she feels for her organ donor.

"What an honour. How proud I am. This is a dream come true for me," she said. "For most of my life, I dreamt of being well. I have got it all now. I have achieved something I never thought possible. It was a constant struggle, but I kept my positivity as much as I could. I always say: positivity, belief, and hope - when you have belief, hope follows, and when you have hope, anything is possible."

She paid tribute to all those who supported her along the way, from those who walked with her during the week-long challenge to those who stood by her throughout her lifelong health battle. However, her deepest gratitude was reserved for the person who gave her the 'gift of life'.

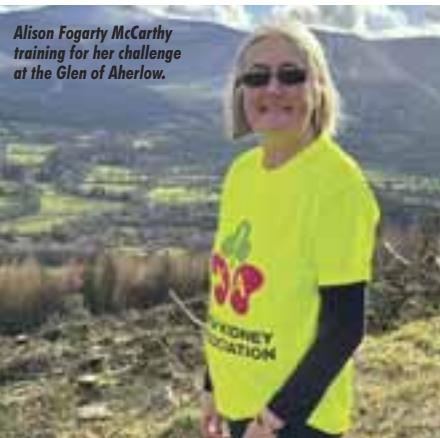
"This journey was my tribute to



Alison at the 'Circle of Life' monument, for organ donors at Beaumont Hospital where she lit a candle in memory of her donor.



them, to the selfless person who made the decision to be an organ donor and to their family, who honoured that wish in their darkest moment. I am living proof that organ donation works. More than ever, people need to understand the importance of making their wishes known. One person's decision can bring so much happiness and joy - giving another person the chance to live a new life."



Alison Fogarty McCarthy
training for her challenge
at the Glen of Aherlow.

In 2015, after just six months of dialysis treatment, Alison received her first kidney transplant from a deceased donor. However, just a week later, her world was turned upside down when the transplant failed due to thrombosis in the artery, and the donor kidney could not be saved.

The devastation of losing the transplant took an immense emotional toll on Alison. "I blamed myself, even though rationally, I know there was nothing I could have done," she explained. "I felt huge disappointment and grief for my kidney donor."

The pain of this loss was overwhelming, and it took her four years to accept being placed back on the transplant waiting list. "Fear of the unknown and the possibility of another failure weighed heavily on me, but over time, I came to terms with the situation, determined to keep going despite the emotional scars."

By December 2023, Alison found herself back on dialysis, peritoneal dialysis, for 10 hours every night at home as well as having four 'exchanges' (called CAPD dialysis) throughout the day.

"I was exhausted, both physically and emotionally," she said. "But then I found the Irish Kidney Association's Peer Support service, which is a free one-to-one confidential service for

patients, and that's when everything started to change."

"The peer supporter I was matched with was a woman who had been through dialysis and two kidney transplants herself, and she became a vital part of my emotional recovery. She was incredible," said Alison. "She understood me in a way that nobody else could. It was like she was my saving angel."

It was during one of those meetings that the peer supporter asked Alison what she would do if she was called for a transplant and Alison joked she would 'skip to Beaumont hospital'. In what felt like an extraordinary twist of fate, hours later, she received the life-changing call from the hospital – an organ had become available for her.

"It was as if the universe had heard me, or like divine intervention," Alison recalled. "I couldn't believe it. It was like serendipity, a miracle that came at just the right time."

After nine years of dialysis treatment, this momentous call led to her transplant in March 2024, the same week that the IKA was running its campaign to mark World Kidney Day (WKD). Alison shared, "The difference in my health has been profound. I can't even begin to express my gratitude for my donor," she said. "This transplant has transformed my life. I am healthier, stronger, and more energetic than I've been in years. I want to show that no matter how difficult life gets, there is always hope."

On the final day of Alison's walking challenge, WKD on March 13th, 2025, Alison accompanied by two of her sisters, Gretta and Maria, disembarked a train at Heuston Station in Dublin at 8.30am. Their walk to Beaumont Hospital brought them through the Phoenix Park and past the Papal Cross where Alison met an American tourist who

Alison with her sisters
Gretta and Maria.



coincidentally shared that she had a form of hereditary kidney disease and that her mother had a kidney transplant also.

Alison's journey culminated at the 'Circle of Life' monument, a poignant tribute to organ donors, located just beside the main entrance of Beaumont Hospital, where she stopped to reflect and gathered with hospital staff who cared for her before taking the train home to Tipperary ahead of a spectacular finale at the Rock of Cashel.

Alison undertook her walking challenge to also raise funds for the IKA, the charity, which she said, has supported her and thousands of other patients and their families. At the time of going to press she had raised nearly €11,000. Her fundraising link remains open until 21st April for those who wish to support this vital cause.

www.idonate.ie/fundraiser/AlisonFogarty

As she stood at the foot of the illuminated Rock of Cashel, Alison's message was clear: organ donation saves lives, and her journey – both literal and personal – serves as a testament to the life-changing power of that decision.



Alison, 5th from right in IKA yellow t-shirt just before sunset at the foot of the Rock of Cashel with family, friends and supporters.

Living with End Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD)

Patient Satisfaction with ESKD Services in Ireland



LIVING WITH END STAGE KIDNEY DISEASE IN IRELAND

Patient Satisfaction with ESKD Services in Ireland

Study Findings

HOW MANY PATIENTS RESPONDED?

1006 renal patients provided their experiences of renal healthcare in Ireland:

- 58% were haemodialysis patients
- 31% had a functioning kidney transplant
- 8% were on home peritoneal dialysis
- 2% were on home haemodialysis

To put these numbers in context, at the end of 2024, there was a total of 5,404 people living with End Stage Kidney Disease in Ireland (2,581 being treated by dialysis and 2,823 with a functioning kidney transplant).

In the summer of 2023, all patients on dialysis and all patient members of the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) were invited to take part in a survey sharing their experiences of receiving treatment for renal failure in Ireland. This research aimed to give a voice to people living on dialysis and those with a functioning kidney transplant by inviting them to share their experiences of renal healthcare, highlight areas that matter most to them and where they feel their patient experience could be improved.

The study findings presented here, provide the first national report exploring how renal patients in Ireland experience the Irish healthcare system. The IKA recognises that every renal patient is an individual that needs personalised care depending on their symptoms and treatment. It is hoped that these findings will help inform future service developments by the IKA and the National Renal Office.

By DR. LISA MELLON, LECTURER,
RCSI UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE & HEALTH SCIENCES

WHAT DID PATIENTS SAY?

Overall, both dialysis and transplant participants are satisfied with how their care is delivered by healthcare staff, but highlighted some aspects of their care that may need further attention. A summary of the study findings for each treatment type is below.

HOSPITAL/SATELLITE HAEMODIALYSIS

Positives:

- Cleanliness of renal facilities: **90%** report that the environments they attend for haemodialysis are always clean and tidy
- Supportive staff, especially nurses: **80%** report that their treatment is "the best it can be", and **93%** report that they are treated with respect and kindness
- Up to **58%** of respondents indicated that they had

opportunities to participate in shared care at some level, such as collaborative decision-making, monitoring own blood pressure on dialysis, dialysis machine set-up, self-needling.

"So far I am happy with my treatment, and I do not wish to change anything."

Areas needing improvement:

- Access to psychological support: only **10%** were referred to a psychologist/counsellor in the past 12 months for support with their mental health

"I don't think there is enough support regarding mental health..."

To read full report: <https://ika.ie/2025/04/patientexperienceswitheskdi/>

"Food needs updating. More given out as we are so tired after dialysis. One dry sandwich is not enough."

- Hospital catering during treatment hours: Only **29%** reported that catering and food is 'very good', while **63%** reported that food choices meet specific dietary needs, such as for diabetic or coeliac patients
- Privacy when discussing sensitive topics: **84%** of patients are dissatisfied with the level of privacy in the dialysis unit

"Our unit needs a small office place to meet privately with professionals. People/patients can hear one's conversation, we have no privacy."

- Communication between various healthcare professionals involved in patient care, such as implementing an Electronic Health Record for easy access to patient files between different medical specialties/hospitals; **65%** reported that communication between their renal team and other healthcare specialists is always good but communication between their GP and renal team is least satisfactory (**53%**).

HOME DIALYSIS (PERITONEAL AND HAEMODIALYSIS)

Positives:

- The freedom and autonomy patients have over their own treatment schedule
- Less time spent travelling to renal units on a regular basis.

Areas needing improvement:

- Financial support from the government, which is not means tested, for increased costs of electricity use, water use, and waste disposal related to home dialysis: only **75%** are aware of the financial assistance measures for home dialysis (via your income tax return).



Cheyenne Downey, Research Assistant, RCSI; Prof. George Mellotte, Consultant Nephrologist, National Clinical Lead for Renal Services; Carol Moore, CEO, IKA; Dr. Lisa Mellon, Lecturer, RCSI; Colin White, National Advocacy & Projects Manager, IKA.

KIDNEY TRANSPLANT RECIPIENTS

Positives:

- A sense of gaining a new lease of life
- Supportive staff: **79%** reported that that their treatment is "the best it can be"
- Satisfaction with out-patient care; **79%** are satisfied with the scheduling of out-patient appointments.

Areas needing improvement:

- General Medical Service card eligibility for all transplant patients, regardless of financial status; **63%** hold a current medical card
- Recognition of kidney disease as a lifelong illness on the Long-Term Illness Scheme
- Reinstatement of financial support, via the Primary Care Reimbursement Scheme, for sunscreen* costs; **25%** reported either sometimes or never wearing sunscreen.

* Sunscreen is an essential part of post-transplant care to prevent skin cancer, and should be worn every day.

"Staff couldn't be better. Happy to be able to be at home for dialysis."

"There is always someone at the end of the phone if I am worried, even at weekends."

"The nurses and healthcare assistants provide the best care possible."

"Sunscreen should be on the medical card as it is a critical part of our on-going care and management of kidney transplant."

"The biggest negative with home haemodialysis I would mention is the high cost of electricity to operate the dialysis machine and all pumps R.O. Machine etc. This can cost up to €1,200 a year to the dialysis patient. This needs to be looked at."

This research study was a collaboration between the Irish Kidney Association, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (Dr Lisa Mellon, Ms Cheyenne Downey, Prof Frank Doyle, Dr Aisling Walsh) and the National Renal Office (Prof George Mellotte, Ms Catherine Sharp, Ms Fidelma Morrissey). CSL Vifor funded the study through an unrestricted educational grant.



Irish Kidney Association



ika ACTIVITY – 2024

PATIENT SUPPORT



PATIENT SUPPORT

822 Patient support requests

COUNSELLING

3,133 FREE HOURS

Referrals up by **4%**

PEER SUPPORT

49 Referrals **267** Sessions



HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

1182 Overnight stays for **300** families

MUNSTER KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE

159 Overnight stays for **70** families



HOLIDAYS

109 Families enjoyed a 6-day holiday

249 Dialysis referrals organised abroad

ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS

ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS WEEK

– APRIL –



39th ANNUAL SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE AND THANKSGIVING

– OCTOBER –

1,100 attended with
40,000 people viewing



ROLL OF HONOUR FOR ORGAN DONORS

ORGAN DONOR CARDS



69,000

DISTRIBUTED

2,800 DONOR CARD APP DOWNLOADS

EVENTS



LIVING WELL PROGRAMME

4

MEETINGS

7

National Branch Forums

33

Branch Meetings

COMMUNICATIONS



32,229



3,643



4,397



900



Emails

1,529

to info@ika.ie

PUBLICATIONS

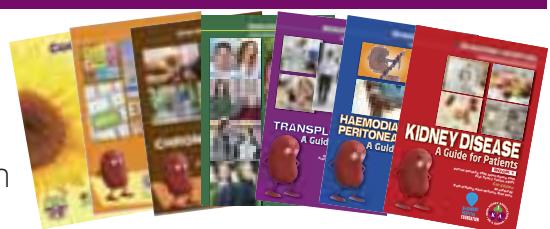
4 FREE

Quarterly
SUPPORT
Magazine



7 FREE

Patient
Information
Books



4,700 issued

18,200

INFORMATION LEAFLETS CIRCULATED

Circulation: **3,400** per issue



UPCOMING EVENTS



AGM

The Irish Kidney Association **Annual General Meeting** will take place on **Saturday 14th June 2025.** in **The Aspect Hotel** Nangor Road, Park West, Dublin 12, D12 F2V4. at **11.30a.m.**
To attend <https://www.ika.ie/agm>

Summit for James 5 Peaks Challenge!

From **June 24-28, 2025**, a group will climb the highest peaks in Ireland and the UK to honour **James McNeive**, from Mayo, who passed away in 2024. Among the beneficiaries is the Irish Kidney Association, a cause close to James's heart, as his brother Matthew has been on dialysis after a failed kidney transplant.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- Join in one or more of the five Challenge Climbs
- Donate to support the challenge and its causes
- Follow the journey on social media:
f [TheJamesMcNeiveFoundation](https://www.facebook.com/TheJamesMcNeiveFoundation)
@ [@the_james_mcneive_foundation](https://www.instagram.com/the_james_mcneive_foundation)
- Donate at:
idonate.ie/crowdfunder/James5PeakChallenge

Your support makes a real difference!

SPRING GIVE AWAY

WIN!

A FAMILY* MINI BREAK at the **4-STAR**



WITH BREAKFAST

A DAY ENTRY FAMILY TICKET TO DUBLIN



In this issue of **SUPPORT** we are offering one lucky reader the opportunity to win a fantastic two-nights staycation for a family of four including breakfast at the **CLAYTON HOTEL DUBLIN AIRPORT** and a **FAMILY DAY ENTRY TICKET** to **DUBLIN ZOO**. Thanks to our friends at **DUBLIN ZOO** for sponsoring the free **FAMILY DAY PASS**.

The hotel prize, kindly sponsored by the **CLAYTON HOTEL DUBLIN AIRPORT**, allows the winner to share their good fortune with three others (sharing including one more adult and 2 children – under 12 years). The group can enjoy the luxurious 4-star hotel as their base for exploring the capital and enjoying a **FREE FAMILY DAY PASS** to **DUBLIN ZOO** for two adults and 4 children.

Nestled in the heart of the Phoenix Park, **Dublin Zoo** is Ireland's **number one family attraction**, welcoming over one million visitors each year. Get ready to embark on **two worlds in one adventure** – from the roar of the Savannah to the stomp of the prehistoric! With over **400 incredible animals** and **more than 40 life-sized dinosaurs** on the thrilling **Zoorassic Trail**, Dublin Zoo offers an action-packed day out bursting with excitement, learning, and discovery.

The **CLAYTON HOTEL DUBLIN AIRPORT** is located just a 15 minutes' drive away from Dublin city centre attractions and is the perfect base to explore nearby scenic seaside villages of Malahide and Howth.

Enjoy the comfort of unwinding in one of the **CLAYTON HOTEL DUBLIN AIRPORT'S** refurbished large bedrooms, its friendly customer service, and its multiple cuisine options from the hotel's award-winning Italian Restaurant or its stunning bar. If the adults have any energy left after a busy day at **DUBLIN ZOO**, sightseeing or shopping, they can take turns enjoying free access to the hotel's fitness centre which is open 24/7.

To enter, simply email: carrie@ika.ie with the word **Zoorassic** in the subject line, include your name, address and contact telephone number, and tell us who you would like to bring with you if you win. The winner will be picked on 08/05/2025 using a random number generator, numbers will be assigned chronologically to entries. By entering this competition, you agree to your name being published in the Summer 2025 issue of **SUPPORT** magazine.

Booking dates for the Clayton Hotel, Dublin Airport is subject to availability. The winner will receive a voucher code to pre-book their visit to Dublin Zoo online at www.dublinzoo.ie. Zoo visit must be pre-booked online. The two prizes can be redeemed separately, at different times. There is no cash alternative.

A Kidney for Life



Sean (left) and Seamus (right) Fitzpatrick who underwent a living donor kidney transplant 50 years ago. Photo: Paul Molloy.

A 50-year journey celebration

In March 2025, Westmeath brothers, Sean and Seamus Fitzpatrick, celebrated a remarkable milestone – 50 years since their life-changing kidney transplants. It was a time of reflection and gratitude for the Fitzpatrick family, who gathered together with friends and loved ones to commemorate the day their lives were forever altered in March 1975.

By GWEN O'DONOGHUE

On Saturday, March 15th this year, the Fitzpatrick families hosted a special fundraising event to mark this half-century milestone at Egans, in Mount Temple, Co. Westmeath. It took place two days after World Kidney Day, a day dedicated to raising awareness about kidney health. Brothers Sean and Seamus raised over €5,500 for the Irish Kidney Association (IKA), a charity close to their hearts.

Sharing in the joy of the occasion, were two other remarkable guests, Gerard O'Neill and his brother Charlie,

who are also enjoying the successful longevity of the living donor kidney transplant operations they underwent 41 years ago.

Eddie Flood, the national honorary Chairman of the IKA, a kidney transplant recipient from a deceased donor, also attended the



Eddie Flood, National Honorary Chairman, Irish Kidney Association with brothers Sean and Seamus Fitzpatrick. Photo: Paul Molloy.



Article that appeared in the Westmeath Independent – 6th June, 1975 –

event to congratulate both sets of sibling brothers.

Sean Fitzpatrick, suffered poor health from the time he was 9 years old, but it wasn't until after a car crash when he was 16, that it was discovered his kidneys were failing. Eight years later his brother Seamus stepped up to donate his kidney to his ailing brother. While theirs was the seventh transplant to take place in Ireland they are now understood to hold the record for the longest surviving donor and recipient of a living donor kidney transplant in Ireland.

Later, both in their twenties they got married, and had children. Sean, who lives in Baylin, near Athlone, has two adult children, while Seamus who lives nearby has four.

Spanning five decades, Sean's transplant kidney is still thriving, a testament to the success of medical advancements.

Reflecting on the early days of his transplant, Sean Fitzpatrick recalled, "In those days, we had to go for regular check-ups, even after the transplant. I was 24 when I received Seamus's kidney, and Seamus was just 22. We were both young lads, and prior to the transplant I spent a lot of time in the old St. Mary's Hospital in Phoenix Park, Dublin, where I had regular stays for medical



Charlie (Cha) and Gerry O'Neill celebrating 41 years and Sean and Seamus Fitzpatrick celebrating 50 years of living donor kidney transplants. Photo: Paul Molloy.

exams and tests. It was a tough time, but I got through it."

Living just two kilometres away from Sean is Gerard O'Neill. Gerard and Charlie O'Neill, underwent their living donor transplant operations in 1984. Gerard was 30 at the time and his younger brother Charlie (Cha) was 26. Their kidneys are still going strong, just like Sean and Seamus.

Gerard shared, "I will always be very grateful to my brother Cha for giving me his kidney. I remember at that time I was going to Jervis Street Hospital for dialysis on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays on a train. Back then there was no HSE taxis, we had to pay for everything. The kidney from Cha never gave me a bit of trouble.

"I can remember well the day after the transplant, Dr. McClean telling me that "your kidney won't give you a day's trouble, it will be something else. And how right he was!

"My wife Pattie and I became involved with the IKA and were Chairman and Treasurer respectively of its Westmeath Branch for over 20 years.

"We had three children who still live very close to us and we see them most days. We also have our two adorable grandchildren, Harry and Ada, and we're so happy to have them to keep us young at heart. Cha

lives just up the road from me and we live close to the Fitzpatrick brothers also.

"We would like to thank the Irish Kidney Association and, in particular, Eddie Flood for his support over the last couple of years. Eddie took over from me a Chairman of the Westmeath IKA Branch, a position he still holds as well as being the National Honorary Chairman.

We hope our stories will encourage people to be kidney donors and give someone like me and Sean Fitzpatrick a future and a much better life."

As Sean and Seamus Fitzpatrick, and Gerard and Charlie O'Neill, celebrate the success of their transplants and their long, fulfilling lives, their stories offer hope to those who are currently waiting for the 'gift of life'.

"There must be something in our local water," Sean jokes, "for all four of us to still be here today and be able to celebrate together!"

The future looks bright for these brothers from two families, whose stories will continue to inspire others for many years to come.

The Fitzpatrick's idonate fundraising link for online donations to the Irish Kidney Association is <https://www.idonate.ie/fundraiser/kathmaree1gmail-com11>

66

There must be something in our local water," Sean jokes, "for all four of us to still be here today and be able to celebrate together!"

ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS WEEK



SATURDAY MAY 10TH – SATURDAY 17TH, 2025

Any time we talk about organ donation, it is important that we acknowledge organ donors, and their families, for making it possible. They are people who have stepped up to do something they did not need to do at a very difficult time in their lives, to support people they will never meet. Their generosity will always be appreciated as they hold a special place in the hearts of our community.

By COLIN WHITE

BACKGROUND

The promotion of organ donation has been an integral part of the work of the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) since its establishment in 1978 and its acknowledged leadership in this area has helped develop the Association's overall public profile as a trusted national charity.

IKA volunteers will again be at the core of the Association's activities during Organ Donor Awareness Week, bringing their 'lived experience' to bear in encouraging empathy from the public and inspiring them to take an organ donor card as an icebreaker for a family conversation about their organ donation wishes.

The history behind Organ Donor Awareness Week is significant as is its impact. It brings an annual focus to the importance of the societal impact of organ donation and highlights the need to let your family know your wishes so that they can give assent in the event of you being a potential organ donor.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

You can contact your local Branch of the IKA to find out about

Marie and Denis Kealy with a photo of their daughter Hannah who through organ donation gave hope to four other families, at the launch of Organ Donor Awareness Week in the Mansion House in 2024.



opportunities in your community to assist during Organ Donor Awareness Week (ODAW). Alternatively, you can contact volunteer@ika.ie.

THE WIDER CAMPAIGN

ODAW is about encouraging a national dialogue about the value of organ donation and transplantation in Irish society and also, at a household level, promoting individual conversations about organ donation wishes.

As has been highlighted elsewhere in the magazine, the Association understands the value of partnership in amplifying its messaging and is particularly pleased to report that our existing community partners continue to support ODAW.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

An Post has again come on board as a partner. As an integral part of so many communities across the country, post offices offer a fantastic platform for spreading the key campaign messaging and making Organ Donor Cards readily available.

350 of An Post's busiest post offices will display donor cards, 295 of its outlets are also displaying the campaign poster on its digital advertising screens and also communicating the message internally to over 11,000 employees.

Working in collaboration with the **Libraries Ireland Healthy Ireland at Your Library** programme for a second year, many public libraries around the country will have Organ Donor Cards available and will also display the '*Don't Leave Your Loved Ones in Doubt*' campaign poster.

As with this year's IKA World Kidney Day campaign, the **Irish Pharmacy Union** and many of the leading **pharmacy chains** are joining the ODAW campaign. There will be use of digital screens as well



To my
Donor Family.
Thank you
for giving me
the 'gift of life'.
— Anon



c/o Organ Donor Coordinators
Organ Donation Transplant Ireland
Ground Floor
Bridgewater Business Centre
Corynham Road, Islandbridge
Dublin D08 T9NH

as having organ donor cards available to customers.

Every year, **Clear Channel** displays the Organ Donor Awareness campaign poster at many of their high profile public electronic advertising boards in shopping centres around the country and we are delighted to report that they are continuing this invaluable support in 2025.



RTÉ's **Fair City** has also been a consistent supporter of Organ Donor Awareness Week – including campaign posters on set for episodes that go out around the time of the campaign. Like the pharmacy chains and Libraries Ireland, this support comes hot on the heels of their support for the IKA's World Kidney Day messaging.

Underpinning these community partnerships, the IKA works hand in hand with the **HSE's Organ Donation Transplant Ireland**

office as well as with the transplanting hospitals, relevant healthcare professionals and related patient organisations.

We are working on developing other partnerships and are open to approaches from potential partners if you can facilitate an introduction. Perhaps you can arrange for organ donor cards to be available in your place of work or education or through a local community group. We will also have the campaign poster available with a QR code to take people to the IKA website to request an organ donor card. The poster will also be available in different languages to assist in reaching the widest possible audience.

THE WIDER CONTEXT

February 2024 saw the Human Tissue Act being signed into law by

the President of Ireland, Micheal D. Higgins. As the first piece of domestic legislation to address the area of organ donation for transplantation it was an historic and long-awaited step forward in this area.

Since then, there has been significant work behind the scenes to lay the groundwork to allow for the relevant changes in the legislation to commence. We are reliably informed that this is being planned for early summer this year.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

There is going to be significant government, media, and public discussion about the place of organ donation in Irish society.

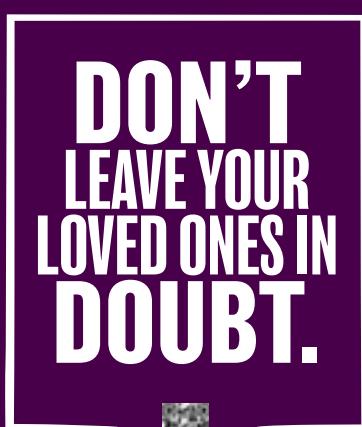
Fortunately, the IKA's annual Organ Donor Awareness Week will take place in advance of the changes, thus offering us an important platform to lay out clear and unambiguous information.

Internationally, we have seen the importance of the public's trust in the organ donation process in ensuring a successful programme of organ transplantation.

Change can often bring uncertainty so it will be important that we all play our part in bringing clarity to the process of how organ donation for transplantation will work under the new legislation and remind people of its life-changing impact.

WHAT AFFECT, IF ANY, WILL THE INTRODUCTION OF THE LEGISLATION HAVE ON THE IKA'S MESSAGING AROUND ORGAN DONATION?

The simple answer is that the IKA's



messaging will remain the same, with the focus, as it always has been, on encouraging the family conversation about organ donation. Hence the message on the posters; *"Don't Leave your Loved Ones in Doubt"*. This is the case because, despite all 'the noise' around the legislation, the family will continue to play a central role in the process.

GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT

- Organ donation only takes place after your loved one has died. The operation is carried out by highly skilled doctors and nurses in the operating theatre in the hospital. It does not interfere with funeral arrangements and the dignity and respect of your loved one is always a priority.
- There are two types of Organ Donation that can be considered:

■ **Donations after Brain stem Death (DBD)**

Organ donation can be considered when a patient on a life support machine is diagnosed brain stem dead. This could be as a result of a massive brain haemorrhage or some form of head trauma. Brain stem death is the permanent loss of function of the brain stem and this is ascertained through tests carried out by two senior doctors to determine absence of brain function.

■ **Donation after circulatory death (DCD)**

This can be considered following the determination of death by cardio-respiratory criteria. A strict protocol is followed before this is considered.

- The organs that can be donated are:
 - Kidneys
 - Liver
 - Lungs
 - Heart
 - Pancreas
 - Heart valves, corneas and tissue can also be donated.
- It must be remembered that only approximately 1-2% of people die in the medical circumstances that allow for them to be considered potential organ donors. With such a small pool of potential organ donors, educating the public about the importance of family consent is at the core of the IKA's work.

continued next page...

ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS WEEK *continued...*

CURRENT SYSTEM OF CONSENT TO ORGAN DONATION

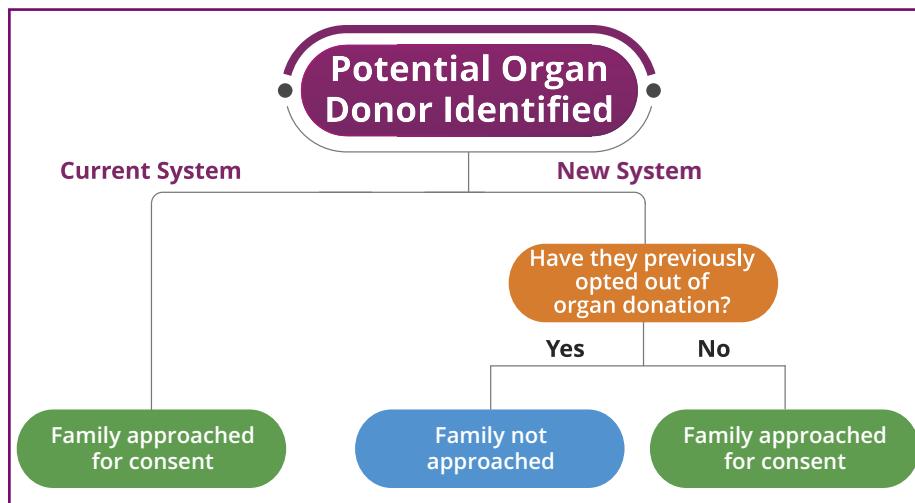
When a potential organ donor is identified according to the criteria outlined above, the next of kin are approached for consent to donate the organs for transplantation.

- If the next of kin give consent, then organ retrieval goes ahead,

and transplantation takes place. It may be that all or only some of the organs are suitable.

- If the next of kin do not give consent, then organ retrieval does not go ahead.

HOW WILL THE NEW LEGISLATION CHANGE THINGS?



ROLE OF THE ORGAN DONOR CARD

The role of the Organ Donor Card is to offer an 'ice-breaker' into starting a family conversation about organ donation. This is why the traditional donor card has a space for the signature from a next of kin – *'I picked up an organ donor card from an IKA volunteer today and I need you to sign it.'* This triggers the family conversation about the willingness to donate and the role of family in ensuring that your wishes are carried out in the event of you dying in the circumstances that allow for organ donation to be a possibility.



KNOWING THE NUMBERS

Members of the public or the media may ask about the number of people involved. At the end of December 2024, there were 2,823 people in Ireland living with a functioning kidney transplant thanks to the generosity of organ donors and their families.

2,581 people were on dialysis and at any time there are approximately 600 people active on the transplant list for all organs of which 500 approximately are on the kidney transplant waiting list.

HSE ODTI preliminary figures, December 27th, 2024

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS WEEK?

Whether it is organising a get-together with family and friends, or setting up an information stand in your school, college, community centre, or place of work, it all makes a difference. A wide range of resources to support awareness are available on the IKA website here.

<https://ika.ie/donorweek/resources/>

You can also tag the Irish Kidney Association when doing social media posts:

𝕏 @IrishKidneyAs

𝕏 @IrishKidneyA

Ⓕ @IrishKidneyAssociation

ⓘ irishkidneyassociation

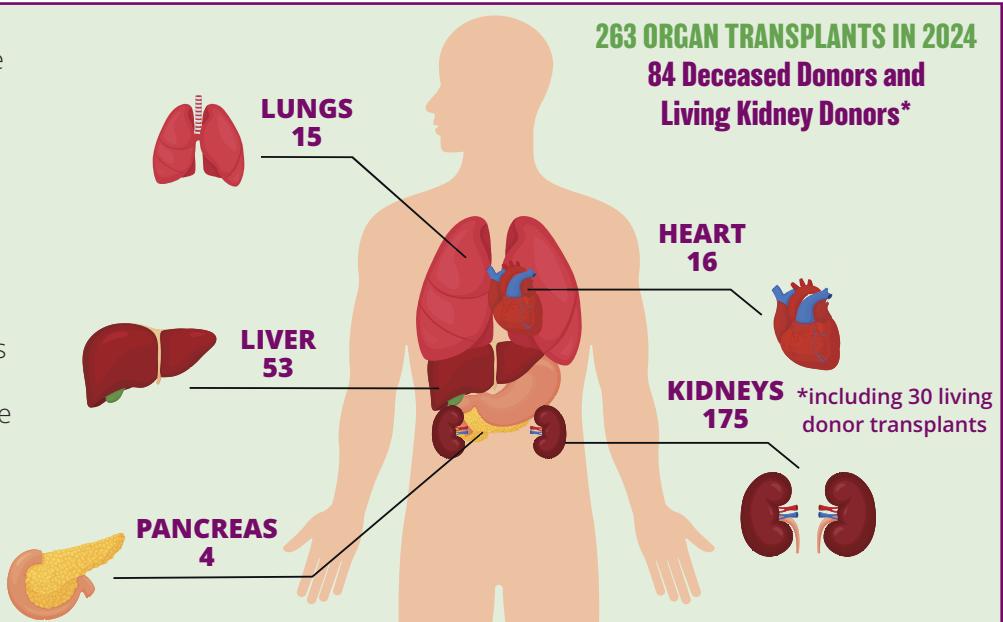
Social media hashtags for Organ Donor Awareness Week are:

#LeaveNoDoubt, #ShareYourWishes and #DonorWeek25

Organ Donor Awareness Week is an opportunity to make a difference. Let's remember that every organ donor card and every conversation gives more hope to those who are waiting for 'the call' to receive the 'Gift of Life'.

263 ORGAN TRANSPLANTS IN 2024

84 Deceased Donors and Living Kidney Donors*



MUNSTER KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE



Gerald, Nicola & Ariana Daniels, Wesley O'Shea.

Spring greetings to you all from the Munster Support Centre.

We celebrated our first anniversary in January, and it heralded in weather warnings and snow. Our Support Centre was given a fresh challenge, and we were delighted to be of help to stranded dialysis patients from the Cork University Hospital (CUH) who couldn't get home. One of our younger dialysis patients and his mum had to be 'extracted' from home in north Cork and stay with us.

While there wasn't much snow in Cork city, 20 minutes outside was a real winter wonderland and it was a pleasure to have these guests stay in the safety and warmth of the Centre.

We also had the opportunity to help three members of the nursing

staff in the Renal Ward of CUH who stayed a night with us during the red warning of Storm Éowyn. As the Centre is set-up to allow access remotely, it allowed the staff to stay safe at home and guests access.

We have just welcomed back Colette to the Support staff following her maternity leave.

On a sadder note, this meant we bade farewell to Aoife. Many of you will have had the pleasure of talking to her on our support line over the past year. We will miss her on the support team but are delighted to say she will continue to volunteer for the IKA as our very own plant whisperer. I'm deeply grateful to her as green fingered I'm not. Our garden is in safe hands.

For World Kidney Day, March 13th,

we hosted our coffee morning at the Centre and we were delighted to have some of the Medical, Nursing and Dieticians from the Renal Department in CUH, the hard working maintenance department who have been very supportive to the Centre and, of course, our Branch members. We had a VIP guest in Professor Plant, to the delight of many of his former patients.

We look forward as always to welcoming more of you to the Centre in the coming months. If you are in CUH at any stage, even for an appointment, please call over – the kettle is ever ready.

Take care.

Sally, Colette and Jennifer

Antoinette Cahill, Fiona Kelleher, Esther Watkins, Christine Sisk, Catherine Horgan, Ger Harkins, Esther McCarthy.



*Phil O'Driscoll
Renal Nurse CUH*



*Irene Cronin,
Renal Dietitian CUH,
Pat O'Sullivan
Prof. Liam Plant
Frances Kendellen*



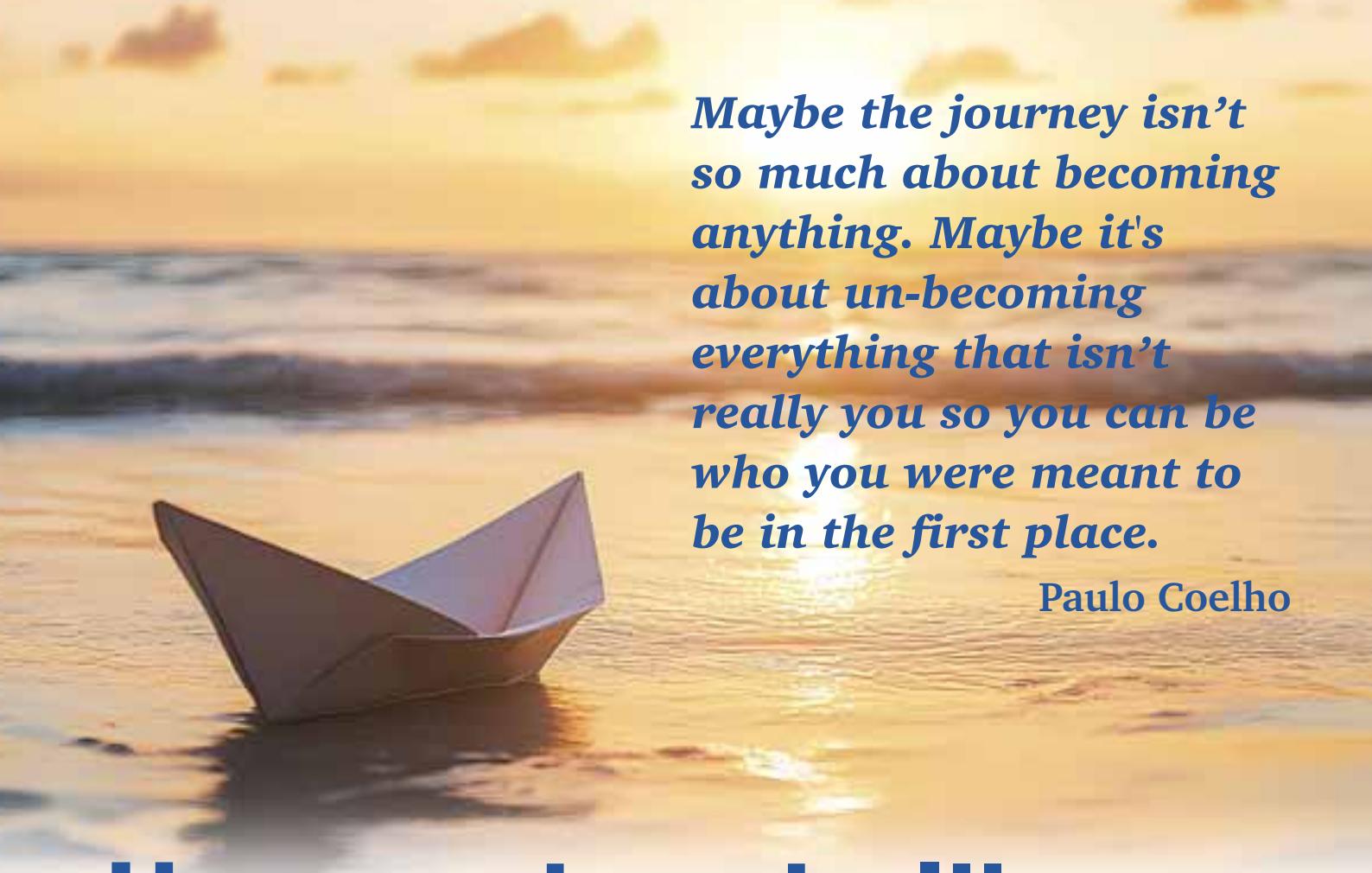
Sally Nagle, Professor Liam Plant, Colette Hawe



Liz Hyland, Elsie Dineen



*Pat O Sullivan, Bernard Cronin, Prof. Joe Eustace,
Nephrologist CUH, Prof. Liam Plant (retired Nephrologist CUH)*



Maybe the journey isn't so much about becoming anything. Maybe it's about un-becoming everything that isn't really you so you can be who you were meant to be in the first place.

Paulo Coelho

Uncertainty in Illness



By AOIFE SMITH
COORDINATOR OF
COUNSELLING SERVICES

Last week, I found myself sitting in the waiting room for an appointment. Armed with a fully charged phone, my iPad, a notebook, and my glasses (since I'm helpless without them), I was prepared to endure another two-hour wait, as I had so often done before. I was ready to pass the time working. However, much to my pleasant surprise – or perhaps shock – my name was called in less than twenty minutes. While this instance played out in my favour, how often do things go the other way? This unexpected turn of events got me thinking about the impact of unpredictability, especially when it comes to health or living with a chronic illness!!

For some, the ability to navigate life's uncertainties is second nature to them, a skill they possess and have finely tuned over time. For others, even a small shift in routine, or the moment

something begins to feel uncertain, can trigger overwhelming feelings of distress. Uncertainty in illness can manifest in several ways. Many patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD) face uncertainty about the progression of their illness. They may wonder how quickly their kidney function will decline or if they will need dialysis or a transplant. If patients have a choice in dialysis, they can feel uncertain about the type of dialysis, its duration, its outcomes, and whether it's the right choice for them.

The unpredictability of CKD can be emotionally exhausting, causing high levels of stress, anxiety, and even depression. Uncertainty often extends beyond medical concerns to affect daily routines. Patients may question their ability to manage symptoms effectively or maintain their quality of life while adapting to significant changes in diet, physical activity, and daily habits. Even

Thank you to all who emailed or called to discuss the counselling service provided here at the Irish Kidney Association. Please continue to email me at aoife@ika.ie with topics that might benefit you to read about. Your comments to me will be completely confidential, no names will be used, and no reference will be made to any person or any specific email. If there is a common theme in the requests, I will base the next article around that topic.

something as routine as getting to a treatment session on time or getting on a dialysis machine becomes loaded with uncertainty, as unexpected delays can disrupt an already tightly managed day.

So, living with uncertainty in illness is not only an emotional challenge but also a mental one. Asking ourselves how we can determine whether we are managing uncertainty effectively or if it's quietly taking a toll on us might be worth exploring for ourselves.

People who manage uncertainty well tend to remain calm and composed when things don't go as planned. They resist the urge to jump to conclusions, instead of allowing themselves to sit with the uncertainty and wait for outcomes to unfold. Decision-making, even in the face of unclear options, feels manageable for them. They tend to approach situations with openness, considering various possibilities and leaning into the 'grey areas' of life rather than tightly sticking to a more black-and-white way of thinking.

On the other hand, when uncertainty starts to take its toll, the signs look different. Those who struggle with uncertainty often feel anxious when outcomes are unclear or when there's a lack of predictability. Decision-making can feel difficult, or it can be avoided altogether for fear of making the 'wrong' choice. They look for a sense of safety in tight structures and resist change which can sometimes lead to missed opportunities that might have been beneficial to them. During these uncertain times, it's

“ So, living with uncertainty in illness is not only an emotional challenge but also a mental one. ”

common to assume the worst-case scenario, which only increases the emotional weight of uncertainty.

This can feel like a very challenging time for most people. However, there are ways to build resilience and navigate uncertainty with possibility:

1. Focus on the Here and Now

Practicing mindfulness can help you stay grounded in the moment. Focus on one day at a time, or even focusing sometimes on just one hour at a time can reduce the apprehension about an unknown.

2. Build a Support Network

Connecting with others – through close relationships support groups or attending counselling – can support a sense of understanding and belonging. Connection reminds us we are not alone on this journey.

3. Communicate Openly

Honest conversations with loved ones or a trusted healthcare team can ensure that your needs and emotions are acknowledged and addressed.

4. Reframe Your Perspective

Although this may not always be easy, viewing uncertainty as an opportunity for adaptability and growth can empower you to face challenges with courage.

5. Practice Self-Compassion

A little self-compassion goes a long way. Be

gentle and kind to yourself during difficult moments. Remember that it's okay not to have all the answers, and small steps forward are still progress. In time, when we look back we can see that all the small steps together can amount to big steps.

Living with uncertainty in illness is no easy feat and it is a deeply personal journey, one with its share of highs and lows. However, within the

unknown lies a surprising opportunity: the chance to discover hidden strengths, cultivate resilience, and even find meaning in hard times. By leaning into the unknown, we unlock our ability to adapt and thrive. We remind ourselves that while we can't control every twist and turn, we can choose how we respond. Embracing uncertainty doesn't mean we have to like it – it may mean understanding its role in shaping a life that's real, courageous, and full of growth.

Let us rise to the challenge and live life as well as we can – not in spite of uncertainty, but because of it.

Leave a Gift in your Will



Donating to the Irish Kidney Association is a meaningful and enduring act of generosity

The Irish Kidney Association has teamed up with **FreeWill.ie** to provide you with a free online service to create or update your will using their will drafting tool.

For more information please see

ika.ie/leave-a-gift-in-your-will/



Adverse weather events highlight the struggles of dialysis patients

Early 2025 presented significant challenges for some dialysis patients in Ireland as severe weather conditions disrupted access to their life-sustaining medical treatments.

The first week in January brought heavy snowfall and then later in the month Storm Éowyn, one of the most devastating storms ever to hit the country. Thousands of homes and businesses were plunged into darkness with power outages, flooding, disruption to water supply, icy and snow-covered roads that made travel dangerous, especially for vulnerable individuals needing critical, time sensitive care like dialysis.

When there is an adverse weather event which affects people receiving home dialysis, they are advised to make contact with the dialysis unit in their treating hospital to make alternative arrangements – this usually involves attending their dialysis unit for treatment.

With in-centre dialysis facilities at, or near, operational capacity, this runs the risk of overwhelming the health system's ability to deliver. With the growth in numbers of people on dialysis and the typical older age profile of patients, the logistics of getting people to and from treatment during adverse weather conditions is only going to get more challenging. The recent weather events highlighted the

vulnerability of people on home therapies and the vital need for secure electricity supply/back-up to maintain a reliable and sterile setting for treatment.

* * * *

One particularly striking case during the heavy snowfall was that of **16-year-old Kieran Harkins from Bweeng, Co. Cork.**

On January 6th, Kieran, who had been diagnosed with kidney failure in March 2024, and his mother Geraldine, found themselves snowed in, unable to make the journey to Cork University Hospital (CUH) for his regular dialysis treatment. Geraldine described the events that transpired, *"My husband had tried to drive our jeep up the road but it got completely stuck. There was between eight and ten inches of snow. Missing dialysis wasn't an option for Kieran. We had to make it to CUH."*

Geraldine explained the challenging situation to RTÉ TV News, the Radio 1 Oliver Callan Show and other media. The hospital called at around 9.10am to check if they could make the dialysis session and just 10 minutes after being told about the problem, the dialysis unit was back on to them with a solution – the Irish Defence Forces would come to transport them.

In disbelief, Geraldine watched as a military jeep arrived at their door to ensure that Kieran could get his vital treatment.



Kieran Harkins being dropped off at CUH on the morning of the heavy snowfall by Steven, Military Police Corporal.

"We are extremely grateful to Steven and Shane who took us to hospital that day. There was a nurse in with us who also needed to get to hospital. We are also very grateful to the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) and their welcoming staff at the Munster Kidney Support Centre (MKSC), which is right beside Cork University Hospital, for providing us with overnight accommodation which took away the stress and worry of not being able to make it to Kieran's dialysis sessions in the following days."

* * * * *

This was just one example of how the emergency services stepped up during this extreme weather event. The severe conditions led to widespread disruption, but it also sparked heartwarming stories of community support and resilience.

The Irish Red Cross deployed up to 140 volunteers in the most severely affected areas, including Tipperary, Cork, Limerick, Kerry, and others. Volunteers operated 15 four-wheel-drive vehicles to transport dialysis patients, cancer patients, and healthcare staff to maintain essential services.

The Irish Red Cross, Defence Forces, Civil Defence, local authorities, healthcare workers, and voluntary agencies all came together to support those most affected by the storm. Their collective efforts ensured that dialysis patients and others undergoing time-sensitive treatments continued to receive the care they needed.

Power outages affected dialysis patients who rely on electricity for at-home treatments. These outages added another layer of difficulty, as patients found it difficult to continue

their treatments at home, forcing them to travel to hospitals in some cases. There were fallen trees blocking roads and interruptions to electricity and water supply with the ESB Network working around the clock to restore supply but in some parts of Ireland this took nearly two weeks.

* * * * *

Twenty-year-old Lana Devine from Kells, Co. Meath has been on dialysis since October 2023. Diagnosed with kidney problems when she was six months old, she had her first kidney transplant from a deceased donor when she was four.

News reports on January 23rd that Storm Éowyn was on the way caused a lot of anxiety, with Lana wondering if she would be able to carry out her overnight peritoneal dialysis session without interruption due to power outages.

She described how at 3.50am in the morning, her dialysis machine alarmed, due to a general power cut. This was five and a half hours into



Lana Devine with her mum Emer.

Kieran was driven home by Corporal Ashley McGrath and Corporal Andy Roche, Military Police.



her dialysis session, which she undergoes seven nights a week for eight hours at a time.

"I was anxious going on dialysis that night not knowing if the storm would interrupt it but I had to do it! When the alarm went off, I had to disconnect but I was in the middle of a 'dwell' so I had to do a manual drain."

Lana described how she had to use a torch for light trying to avoid touching off something that might lead to infection. *"I felt the effects of not completing the treatment in the morning with a lot of pain and discomfort."*

The following day, with no prospect of power being restored, Lana's parents took her to her Aunt Mary's house, which still had electricity, bringing all her dialysis equipment with them. *"I couldn't take a chance,"* she said, *"and my cousin kindly gave me her bedroom to stay in on Friday night."*

The journey to her aunt's house was an ordeal, as they encountered fallen trees and had to take a diversion to get there. There was also fear during the journey that, despite the storm having passed, they were risking their lives just to get to a secure place for dialysis treatment.

Thankfully, the power was restored at Lana's house the next day, and she was able to return home and set up her equipment again.

In February as Lana's home treatment wasn't working well for her, she switched to haemodialysis treatment three times a week at Beaumont Hospital.

She has been offered a place in teacher training at St. Patrick's College in Drumcondra, Dublin, but has put it on hold until she receives a

continued next page...

Adverse weather continued...

kidney transplant. She is hoping for a call about a suitable match from a deceased donor, but there is also a possibility that a living donor can be found.

Her father, Jody Devine, a former county Meath All-Ireland football winning forward, hopes to enter the paired exchange programme in Belfast, where he could donate a kidney to match someone else on the list, and in return, Lana would receive a kidney from their living donor.

Lana is hopeful that 2025 will be the year she gets her transplant and she can finally take up her place in college.

* * * *

Paul Tumulty (62) from Coreen, Oldtown Athlone, Roscommon, was diagnosed with kidney disease in 2014. He has been undergoing nightly automated peritoneal dialysis (PD) for five years. Storm Éowyn cut off power and water supply in his home for a number of days.

Paul's kidney condition is attributed to a rare blood disease he has and microvascular angina which affects tiny vessels that deliver blood to heart tissue.

He was an inpatient at Galway University Hospital at the time of the storm. The hospital decided it was best not to discharge him and he underwent dialysis there.

Paul explained that prior to his health issues he was always very active and physically fit, playing football until he was 52. When he noticed he hadn't the energy to play anymore, a blood test revealed his kidney disease. With depleted energy levels, the father of five has had to wind down his successful car sales and repairs business.

Paul contacted the IKA and suggested, *"a simple solution to address power outages for some patients who need life-saving medical devices like dialysis machines in their homes is to provide them with turnover switches for electricity supply, and have generators delivered to them on loan by the Civil Defence or army."*

Whilst the provision of a generator may solve the problem for some patients and assuming logistical issues can be overcome and generators can be stored and then delivered in a timely manner, it might not be a viable solution for other patients who don't have the capacity to manage a generator, for example,

those who are living in apartments.

Storm Éowyn was the catalyst for Paul to pursue an application for free Solar Panels as a registered high-priority customer since before 2022. This required him to change to one of the four electricity providers who are involved in the scheme (see pages 34-35). His application is currently being processed.

In the meantime, Paul keeps himself busy and stays positive while on the transplant waiting list. He supports his local Padraig Pearse GAA Club where some of his children have played including his accomplished footballer son, Roscommon Senior player, Jack, who is now a student and plays for Dublin City University.

Paul went on holiday to Italy bringing his PD dialysis machine with him and shares, *"I would recommend this to other dialysis patients who are considering holidaying abroad."*

In March 2025, to mark World Kidney Day and raise funds for the Irish Kidney Association, Paul with the help of his wife Pauline and family and his friend Geraldine Ward, organised a Table Quiz which was held at the Pillar House Bar and Restaurant in Ballinasloe with quizmaster Kieran Coakley. The night was a great success and over €3,000 was raised.

* * * *

Stella McDonagh from Liscannor, Co. Clare recalls it as being a particularly difficult experience when in January Storm Éowyn caused a power outage and chaos in their routine.

Her husband **Garry** undergoes haemodialysis three times a week at Limerick University Hospital while her 10-year-old daughter **Saoirse**, who shares the same autoimmune disorder as her father, Alport Syndrome, undergoes peritoneal dialysis at home six nights a week.

"We lost electricity and water, which made everything so much harder and caused a lot of anxiety. Saoirse's dialysis was delayed. Not knowing when electricity would return, my aunt put me in contact with the local community hospital in Ennistymon, which looks after the elderly and

Paul Tumulty with his dialysis machine.



provides respite care. We were so grateful that they were willing to accommodate us.

"They kindly agreed to provide a room for Saoirse where she could bring her dialysis machine and supplies to carry out her dialysis there. Thankfully the electricity returned after two days, and Saoirse didn't have to avail of this. I was able to put Saoirse back on dialysis at home but we were waiting a further five days for the water to return. An infection at Saoirse's exit site for dialysis required daily dressings. The lack of water meant I had to boil a kettle just to ensure proper hygiene."

Stella explained, "While Garry's dialysis treatments continued as normal in the wake of the storm, since he is treated in a hospital, it was stressful for both of us worrying about Saoirse's health, with so much uncertainty trying to make contingency plans. Our nearest dialysis hospital is in Limerick where there are no paediatric renal services,

Saoirse and Garry.



and Saoirse's paediatric nephrologist Dr. Maria Stack and the renal team are located at CHI Temple Street in Dublin. The hospital staff are extremely helpful and we are truly grateful for their care and support."

Despite the family's health challenges their resilience shines through. With the combination of hospital dialysis for Garry and home dialysis for Saoirse, Stella's focus is on getting her husband and daughter on the transplant waiting list which they are currently being worked up for and hope to be on before the end of this year.

* * * * *

As Ireland faces more frequent and intense weather events due to climate change, these instances highlight the vital role of community support systems and emergency services in safeguarding the well-being of vulnerable populations.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the hospital staff and many individuals and organisations who went above and beyond to help those in need during these unprecedented weather challenges.



SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE IKA

Yes, I would like to make a regular donation by STANDING ORDER.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

STANDING ORDER REQUEST FORM

To: The Manager of _____ (Your bank's name and address)

I/We hereby authorise you to set up a Standing Order on my/our account as specified below: (Please print all information clearly)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ Ph: _____

PLEASE CHARGE TO MY / OUR ACCOUNT: Name of Account: _____

IBAN: Bank Identifier Code - BIC: (These can be found, printed on your bank statement)

My regular Monthly Quarterly Yearly DONATION of Amount € _____

(Please tick as appropriate) to start on Date: _____ / _____ / _____

AND CREDIT TO THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT:

Name of account: **IRISH KIDNEY ASSOCIATION** at Bank of Ireland, College Green, Dublin 2.

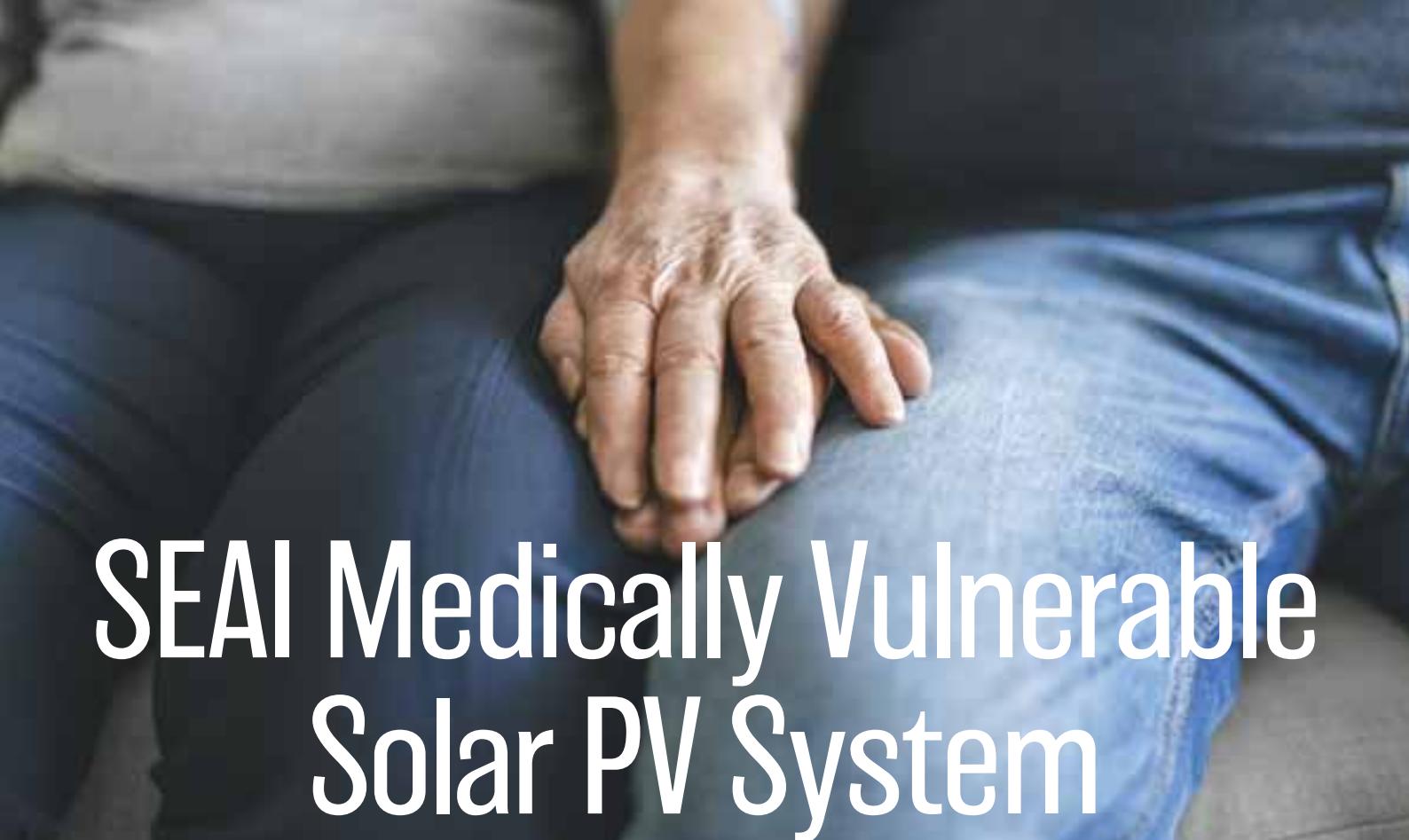
IBAN NO.: **IE06 BOFI 9000 1717 1934 35** BIC NO.: **BOFIIE2D**

As long as you are a PAYE or self-employed tax payer, when you donate €250 or more in a year (€21 or more per month), the Revenue Commissioners will give the Irish Kidney Association CLG an extra rebate of 45%. For example, if you give €250 in one year, the IKA would gain an extra €112, at no extra cost to you. To download a CHY3 form please go to www.ika.ie/tax-back-donations



ONCE YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE MANDATE FORM PLEASE SEND IT TO YOUR BANK.

CHARITY REG. NO. 20011260



SEAI Medically Vulnerable Solar PV System



By COLIN WHITE
IKA NATIONAL ADVOCACY
& PROJECTS MANAGER

WHAT'S INCLUDED

The SEAI is funding the installation of a 2kWp solar PV system on homes, that are suitable, for those people listed on the ESB Priority Services Register.

ELIGIBILITY FOR THE SCHEME

A homeowner may be eligible to participate in the SEAI Medically Vulnerable Scheme if:

- a. he/she, a member of their household, or one of their tenants, is registered in the life support category of the Priority Services Register maintained by ESB Networks as at 22nd November 2022; and
- b. the relevant property was built and occupied on or before 31st December 2020 and is suitable to receive a Solar PV Installation.

WHEN YOU JOINED THE PRIORITY SERVICES REGISTER

As can be seen from the eligibility criteria, you **MUST** have been on the Priority Services Register **BEFORE 22nd November 2022**. Anecdotal feedback is that this requirement is being enforced by the service providers.

Given that there is a very strong business case for growing the home-dialysis programme across the country, it seems counter-intuitive to keep new patients outside a scheme that could help address the very real financial disincentive that exists for patients when considering home dialysis.

The Irish Kidney Association is seeking clarity around the cut-off date and whether consideration could be given to people starting their dialysis journey, since November 2022, given the significant financial savings for the State that can be made when someone chooses to dialyse from home rather than in-centre.



WHAT IS A VULNERABLE CUSTOMER?

A Vulnerable Customer is a person who is: critically dependent on electrically powered equipment. This includes (but is not limited to) life protecting devices, assistive technologies to support independent living and medical equipment, or vulnerable to disconnection during winter months for reasons of advanced age or physical, sensory, intellectual or mental health. (The above definition is taken from the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU).)

You must be the legal owner of the property and/or have the consent of any persons who have rights over the property that may be affected by the Solar PV Installation, including any co-owners.

Speaking in the Dáil last year, the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan TD, stated,

"The Solar PV for the Medically Vulnerable Scheme is a targeted scheme for the installation

of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels for customers/ households who are registered on the life support category of the Priority Services Register.

These homes have a dependence on electrically powered equipment, including medical equipment, life protecting devices and assistive technologies, for example dialysis machines, respirators, etc. As such, these households may have a higher energy demand than the average user and this."

Source:
www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2024-11-05/99/#spk_505

YOUR FREE SYSTEM INCLUDES

- x5 400w Solar Panels
- x1 String Inverter
- Full installation, commissioning and associated ancillary

products needed to complete your installation

WHO SET UP THIS SCHEME AND WHO IS RUNNING IT?

This scheme was setup by SEAL and therefore is being funded by the Government of Ireland. Eligible homeowners from the Priority Services Register have been chosen for this scheme. However, it is important to note that this scheme is not operated by SEAL. It is managed by the four main energy suppliers:

- Bord Gáis,
- Energia,
- SSE Airtricity, and
- Electric Ireland

If you are with a different provider, you will need to explore the possibility of changing to one of the four listed above.

HOW MUCH IS IT GOING TO COST ME?

This scheme is being implemented by the SEAL in partnership with your chosen service provider.

It is completely free of charge to you, the homeowner. The scheme is being funded by the SEAL and the Government of Ireland.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

All eligible homeowners should be contacted by their service provider with an introduction to the scheme, giving some information on what it entails and why they have been chosen.

If you are with one of the four providers and they have not contacted you about the scheme you should make contact with them and ask about your eligibility.

REGISTERING AS A VULNERABLE CUSTOMER

- Bord Gáis www.bordgaisenergy.ie/resources/vulnerable-customers
- Electric Ireland www.electricireland.ie/residential/vulnerable-customers
- SSE Airtricity www.sseairtricity.com/ie/home/news/supporting-those-that-need-it-most
- Energia www.energia.ie/customer-area/vulnerable-customers



JOIN #TEAM IKA AS A CHARITY FUNDRAISER



VHI WOMEN'S MINI MARATHON

Sunday, June 1st



RING OF KERRY CHARITY CYCLE

Saturday, July 5th



DUBLIN MARATHON

Sunday, October 26th

ika.ie/fundraising/

EXCITING NEWS FOR THE IRISH KIDNEY ASSOCIATION



We are a Tier 1 Charity for the 2025 Ring of Kerry Charity Cycle



Building on the incredible success of last year's **Ring of Kerry Charity Cycle**, where we proudly participated as a Tier 2 charity, we are thrilled to announce that this year, the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) has been selected as a Tier 1 charity! This is a huge milestone for us, and we couldn't be more excited for the upcoming event.

By SINEAD McDONALD & LISA FITZGERALD

The 170kms circular route starts and ends in Killarney and takes place on Saturday, July 5th 2025.

In 2024, we raised an incredible €60,000, thanks to the generosity of supporters, and had over 60 cyclists taking part to support the Irish Kidney Association. The event was a fantastic success, not just for our charity, but for all involved, and the atmosphere in Kerry that weekend was absolutely electric! The energy and spirit of the participants, volunteers, and spectators were truly something special.

As a Tier 1 Charity in 2025, we have even bigger goals. Our aim is to increase the number of cyclists participating, raise even more funds, and spread greater awareness of kidney disease across the country. We're calling on cycling clubs, businesses, and communities nationwide to join us for this remarkable event.

Last year, teams from all over Ireland came together for the Ring of

Kerry Charity Cycle, making it a truly national event. This year, we would love to see even more involvement from our regional Branches and local communities. Whether you are part of a cycling club, a local sports group, or simply want to support a great cause, there's a way for everyone to get involved.

We encourage you to reach out to your local cycling clubs, rally your friends and colleagues, and start training for this fun-filled, challenging event. It's not just about the cycle – it's about coming together to support the IKA and help those who are living with kidney disease.

The weekend in Kerry is more than just a cycling event. It's an experience – the atmosphere is truly palpable. The breathtaking scenery of the Ring of Kerry, the sense of camaraderie among participants, and the excitement of being part of such an impactful event make it a must-attend for anyone who loves cycling or supporting a good cause.

We are incredibly grateful for the ongoing support of our participants, volunteers, and donors. This year promises to be even more incredible as we work to make a lasting difference in the lives of those affected by kidney disease. If you are interested in joining us, please email fundraising@ika.ie

We would love to have you join us for this amazing event. Let's make the 2025 Ring of Kerry Charity Cycle the biggest and most successful yet!

We look forward to seeing you on the road this July – together, we can make a difference!

LA ROCHE POSAY
LABORATOIRE DERMATOLOGIQUE
giveaway

We're excited to offer a La Roche-Posay hamper worth €130, just in time for sunny days ahead! A big thank you to La Roche-Posay for sponsoring this prize and products for our participants – including transplant recipients – in the VHI Mini Marathon, Dublin City Marathon, and Ring of Kerry Charity Cycle, to stay safe in the sun.

To enter: Email your name, address, and phone



number to carrie@ika.ie with 'La Roche-Posay' in the subject line. Winner picked at random.

Deadline: May 8th. Enter now for your chance to win!

FLARE Project

An innovative and interactive educational resource has been developed by staff in Beaumont Hospital to help patients discuss kidney disease with the children in their lives.

The idea and concept for the project started as it became increasingly evident through patient experience forums, chronic kidney disease (CKD) education days and individual patient assessments that patients were struggling with when and how they should discuss their disease with their children.

When we went to search for resources to support these families, we found that none were available nationally and international material was outdated. The Patient Care Coordinators' and Medical Social Work departments in Beaumont Hospital have a passion for ensuring tailored psychosocial care needs of each individual are met so with this in mind we decided to develop specialised educational material to help families with young children.

The project is aimed at children between the ages of 3 and 15 years and it aims to

- give adults the tools they need to explain kidney disease in a relatable and age-appropriate manner to the children in their lives.
- empower families to talk openly



about kidney disease and dialysis by creating a supportive environment for children to ask questions and express their feelings.

- FLARE provides resources and strategies to guide these important conversations.

The resource consists of a

- Booklet for adults which contains an information leaflet.
- Bookmark with our QR code which brings you to an age-appropriate educational video.
- Four activity sheets/colouring pages.
- Colouring pencils.

Recognising that these discussions can sometimes be overwhelming for children, FLARE also signposts families to additional support services, ensuring that everyone has access to the help they need.

Plans for the future

- Dissemination of the resource to renal

centres nationally

- Potential expansion to family education sessions
- The publication of a storybook
- The potential to transfer the concept to other chronic diseases.

The FLARE Project has been brought together by

Team Members

Renal Patient Care Coordinator Team

Sarah McCormac, CNM2

Brenda Groarke, CNM2

Andrea Scully, CNM2

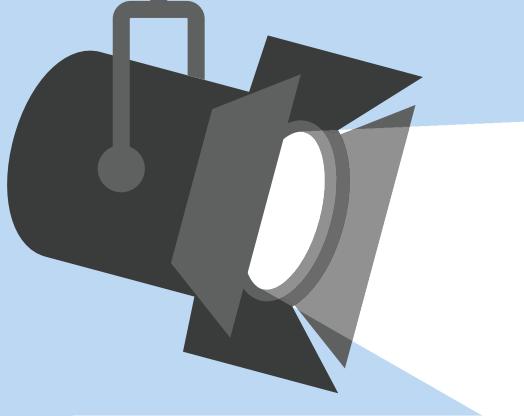
Ana Bica, CNM2

Clinical Nurse Manager 3 Home Therapies – Maria Greene

Senior Social Worker

Stone Scannell





SPOTLIGHT ON...

VOLUNTEER

By DEIRDRE MARKEY
and SARAH BUCHANAN

For this issue we shine a spotlight on a prominent member of the IKA community - **Bernie Dwyer**.

Bernie has been a dedicated volunteer with the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) for over 20 years. Following her husband Mick's kidney transplant 25 years ago, both became deeply involved in the IKA community.

Bernie has shown exceptional leadership and has been a driving force within the Dublin East and Wicklow Branch, serving in various roles at a Branch level. Together with other volunteers from the Branch she has provided support, participated in organ donor awareness campaigns, fundraising activities and has participated in building awareness of Chronic Kidney Disease at information stands in local hospitals and in other locations.

Beyond her local involvement, Bernie has actively contributed to the IKA's national initiatives, including the Annual Service of Remembrance, Organ Donor Awareness Week, World Kidney Day, supporting the Punchestown Kidney Research Fund (PKRF), and has had a familiar and supportive presence, always offering encouragement and dedication to those who participate in transplant and dialysis sports events.

Bernie's commitment and passion as an IKA volunteer continues to make a meaningful impact on the lives of kidney patients and their families.

Bernie Dwyer



DUBLIN EAST AND WICKLOW IKA BRANCH

Q. Is volunteering important to you, and if it is, why is that?

A. I have always thought it important to volunteer, in the parents' association, residents' association, etc., and of course the IKA. Helping and supporting others is what it's all about.

Q. Why did you choose to volunteer with the Irish Kidney Association (IKA)?

A. My husband Mick is transplanted 25 years thankfully and we got great support from our Branch at the start of his journey. I felt it was only right to be involved in promoting organ donor awareness and advocating for dialysis patients.

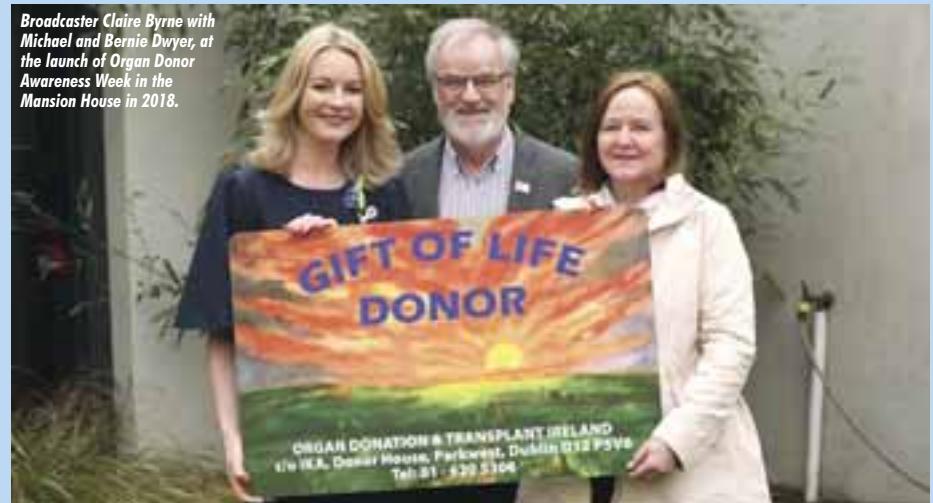
Q. How did you get involved with the IKA?

A. We heard about the IKA after speaking to someone in Tallaght Hospital Renal Clinic, post-transplant. We went along to our first meeting in The Royal Marine Hotel in Dun Laoghaire, where we were warmly welcomed. We still have contact with some of those present on that day.

Q. What time commitment does it demand of you?

A. You can give as little, or as much as you are able to, and different roles require more or less time. I find once you get involved you don't count the time at all! Now there are Volunteer Branch

Broadcaster Claire Byrne with Michael and Bernie Dwyer, at the launch of Organ Donor Awareness Week in the Mansion House in 2018.





Bernie (right) with Jen and Maire, staff at St. Vincent's Hospital on World Kidney Day 2024.

Support officers at Donor House who will give great help and advice, and of course your fellow members.

Q. In what ways have you found volunteering with the IKA rewarding/challenging?

A. It is so rewarding to feel you can be a listening ear to a new patient on their journey and offer support in little and practical ways, as well as introducing them to the services available from the IKA, i.e. peer support, counselling, etc. The challenge is always getting more people on board for events for donor awareness or lending a hand at fundraising events.

Q. Can you share a memorable experience that has had a significant impact on you?

A. I remember the joy felt in the Branch when, last year at a summer get-together, four members shared how they had all had a transplant within a couple of months of each other.

Everyone present was so happy for them and how they expressed their thanks to their donors! Also, thanks to his donor, when my husband was fit enough to compete through the support of the Transplant Sports Team. It was amazing to see him take part in the World Transplant Games.

Q. What advice would you give to someone considering volunteering with the IKA?

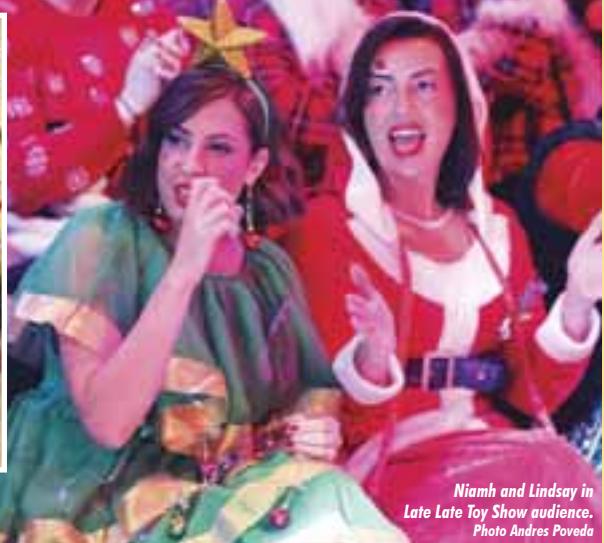
A. It is a very rewarding experience to be part of a group who will welcome you warmly and support you as you get that important message out there...“Join the Conversation”.

It's a few hours a year...just get in touch...you won't regret it.

LATE LATE TOY SHOW - Golden Ticket -



Lindsay and Niamh.



Niamh and Lindsay in Late Late Toy Show audience. Photo Andres Poveda

Two young mothers, **Niamh McCabe** (35) and **Lindsay Daly** (36), have been inseparable since their junior infants year at Scoil Mochua in Celbridge, Co, Kildare. Their bond has grown stronger over the years. Despite life's challenges, they have remained each other's pillars of support. Little did they know that this friendship would lead them on an extraordinary journey filled with hope, love, and the promise of a life-saving gift.

In a heartwarming turn of events, Niamh, who now lives in Leixlip with her husband and two children, applied for audience tickets to the RTÉ *Late Late Toy Show* sharing her wish to bring her friend Lindsay. In her application for the coveted tickets, Niamh wanted to demonstrate her huge appreciation to her dear friend who had stepped up to donate a kidney to her.

Niamh has polycystic kidney disease – an hereditary condition that runs through her family, affecting several relatives, including her late father John, as well as aunties and uncles.

In January this year, she began nightly dialysis at home, which lasts for eight hours at a time.

Last November, she received a phonecall from the RTÉ Late Late Show to advise her that she had won the Late Late Toy Show Golden Tickets prize of two tickets.

The week before the Toy Show special, a researcher arrived at Lindsay's doorstep in Lucan with the exciting news which was aired live. They were chosen for their close friendship, the extraordinary deep bond they shared borne out by their decision to undergo a living donor kidney transplant together.

Niamh described how the excitement was contagious as she and Lindsay prepared for the show, with Niamh dressed as a Christmas tree and Lindsay dressed as Mrs Claus. They joined a lively audience all wearing festive outfits which set the stage for a night of fun, full of festive spirit, and excitement, living in the moment despite Niamh's challenges. They returned home with a haul of giveaways, much to the excitement of their children who had watched the Toy Show with an even keener interest than in previous years.

As Niamh continues her journey on dialysis, the ultimate goal remains in sight, a kidney transplant. The hope of receiving a kidney from her friend Lindsay who also has two children, keeps her going. The two friends are hopeful that soon, they will be able to undergo a living donor kidney transplant at Beaumont Hospital, offering Niamh hope that the ultimate prize – the 'gift of life' – will soon be within her reach.

By GWEN O'DONOGHUE

‘Gift of Life’ Ball honours Isabel

Lynda O’Mahony Dawes, Sally Nagle, Annie Foley.



By SALLY NAGLE

Three Cork ladies - **Sally Nagle** and **Annie Foley**, who each received kidney transplants, and **Lynda O’Mahony Dawes** - who underwent a liver transplant, have all been brought together through their shared experiences. They are deeply grateful to their organ donors and their families for this second chance at life. Here **Sally Nagle** writes about the friends trio coming together to organise a very successful ‘Gift of Life’ Charity Ball.

I first met our dear friend Isabel Terry (a double lung and heart transplant recipient) in 2017 at a meeting hosted by the Irish Kidney Association (IKA). Soon after, I connected with Annie at the kidney clinic, and our friendship blossomed from there. Our bond grew even stronger when I met Lynda while organising the inaugural ‘Gift of Life’ Ball in 2018. At the 2018 Ball, Isabel was a speaker on the night and shared her journey about her 14-year wait for her transplant.

This event marked the beginning of something truly special – a friendship built on love, compassion, and vulnerability. Our meet-ups, especially our cherished afternoon teas, became a time for laughter, heartfelt conversations, and an unwavering sense of support.

One of the most memorable moments we shared occurred when



The late Isabel Terry.



*Phil O’Driscoll, Michelle Burke
Renal nurses in Cork University Hospital.*



Claire & Andrew Walls Cole.



The Roadrunners from Limerick.

Isabel and Lynda arrived at one of our afternoon teas wearing the same dress! The room erupted in laughter, and Annie and I joked that we must have missed the memo.

Another unforgettable day was when we visited the Imperial Hotel for afternoon tea and ended up chatting from 2pm to 7pm – a typical afternoon for us! Once we started talking, it was hard to stop.

For those who didn't have the privilege of knowing Isabel, she was a true inspiration. She was a warrior, facing countless health challenges with immense courage, strength, and determination. Isabel had an infectious zest for life, always planning her next holiday or organising an afternoon tea. Her resilience and joyful spirit made her an irreplaceable part of our group.

Isabel was also a tireless advocate for organ donor awareness. She fought passionately for those awaiting life-saving transplants, even while she herself was waiting for her own 'gift of life'.

When Isabel passed away in October 2023, we were overwhelmed with grief, but we knew we had to honour her in a meaningful way. It didn't take long for us to decide that another 'Gift of Life' Ball would be the perfect tribute to our friend. Isabel had asked me countless times when we would hold the next Ball, so we knew it was the right way to celebrate her life. As the girls often say, "Isabel would have been the first to plan what dress and shoes to wear, and of course, she would've given us all fashion advice too!"

Organising the event in Isabel's memory was a deeply personal experience for us. As friends who had faced similar health journeys, and now shared the loss of a beloved friend, this event became an opportunity to both celebrate her and raise awareness for a cause



Fere & Jeff Nagle, Livingstone and Laura Kiwanuka, Sally Nagle (kidney recipient), Sabina & Ken Nagle, Sophie Sullivan, Nuala Nagle, Ben & Jeannan Nagle.



Emma McSweeney, Sinead O'Mahony, Gavin Rowan, Rebbecca Lewis, Niamh O'Mahony, Lynda O'Mahony Dawes (liver transplant recipient), Simon Dawes, Trish O'Mahony, David O'Mahony, Rachel McLellan, Jan Anand, Belle McLellan, Robbie O'Sullivan.

close to our hearts. We are incredibly grateful to Philip, Isabel's husband, her mother Deirdre, her siblings, and extended family for allowing us to honour Isabel in this way.

The event took place on November 15th, 2024 at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Cork, where over 300 people gathered to celebrate the 'gift of life'.

The evening was electric from the moment it began – you could feel the room filled with love, pride, and a shared connection to the miracle of organ donation. The event brought together organ recipients, living donors, and their families to not only celebrate life but also to raise funds for the IKA's Munster Kidney Support

Centre (MKSC) located 200 metres away from Cork University Hospital (CUH). Most importantly, it was a time to remember and celebrate our dear friend Isabel, and the lives of transplant recipients everywhere.

The evening began with a drinks reception, accompanied by beautiful music and singing from Aisling McCarthy. This was followed by a delicious four-course meal, after which guests were treated to an incredible performance by *The Roadrunners*, a lively band from Limerick that had the dance floor buzzing even during soundcheck. The night was then rounded off by the DJ – the amazing Ryan Deasy.

continued...



Pat O'Sullivan, Mary Hurley (both Kidney transplant recipients), Theresa Looney, Valerie O'Connor.



Veronica Higgins, Willie & Triona O'Connell, John Hurley.



'Gift of Life' Ball honours Isabel contd....

Isabel's family: Niall O'Flaherty, Stephanie Terry, Gillian Terry, Bill Terry, Tim Murphy, Julie Terry, Deirdre Terry (Isabel's mother), Hilary Murphy, Charlie Murphy, Isabelle Murphy.

Our Master of Ceremonies for the night was the incredible Maeve Dennehy, a woman who has dedicated so much of her time to charity work and is the owner of a clothing shop, 'Love Cherish,' in Charleville. Maeve had also done a podcast with me a few years ago, where I shared my journey with kidney failure. We knew she would be the perfect fit for the event, and as she said in her opening address, you could truly feel the love in the room.

Before the meal, Lynda, Annie, and I gathered to support each other as we addressed the guests. I thanked everyone for attending, sharing our story and highlighting the importance of raising awareness for organ donation and supporting the MKSC.

Lynda then read a poem called 'Love Matters,' which was a beautiful reminder of the importance of being there for one another, no matter

what.

Following this, Annie and Lynda made presentations, on our behalf, to Philip, Isabel's husband; Deirdre, Isabel's mother; and Maeve, for Isabel's outstanding work and support. We also presented a framed photograph to Jennifer Barry, the supervisor of the MKSC, to be displayed in the Support Centre as a lasting reminder of the event.

We were deeply moved by the support from local businesses that sponsored the event and donated over 40 prizes for our raffle. The generosity shown by everyone involved was truly heart-warming.

We must say a big thank you to our main sponsor for this event, the Irish Quality Centre, for their amazing support. Each guest was also given a gift bag on the night, which included a booklet of inspiring stories from donor families, transplant recipients, and those awaiting the 'gift of life'.

We can't forget to thank Diarmuid

Gillingham from Flash Focus Media for capturing some beautiful moments from the night.

We are thrilled to announce that the night raised over €28,000 to support the ongoing costs of the MKSC. This incredible amount will ensure the Centre can continue to support kidney patients and their families during challenging times. Whether it's offering a place to stay overnight, providing a much-needed break from the hospital, or offering emotional support, the Centre is truly a home away from home for many. People travel from all over Munster to benefit from the services it provides. I now work at the Centre and see first-hand how it has been such a big support to so many.

As we reflect on that unforgettable night, we are filled with gratitude – for the incredible support, the love of our community, and the opportunity to honour the legacy of our dear friend Isabel.



Lynda O'Mahony Daves, Maeve Dennehy (event MC), Sally Nagle, Annie Foley.



Sahar Rahmani & Neysan Chah, Rory Cunningham, Emma Barry, Vandaud Imani, Ciarmh Alexander-Imani, Jerry McAuliffe, Una Hussey, Jeff & Fere Nagle, Hugh McNamara, Laura Walsh.



Aisling McCarthy

Samantha Coakley, Sally Nagle, Deirdra Footman, Mary Lynch, Orla Doran, Philip Reid.



Erin Roche, Eva McAuliffe, Pamela Tobin, Jacquie Walker, Roisin Corr (living donor), Debbie Sheehy McAuliffe (kidney transplant recipient).



Ed Muldowney, Elana Gray, Alan Gray, Anthony Clare, Mieria Clare, Philip Byrne (Isabel's husband), Warren Byrne, Tracey Byrne.

Deirdre O'Sullivan, Bernadette Mannix, Breda Nagle.



Aoife Dunne, Jennifer Barry, Sarah Buchanan, Wesley O'Shea, Sally Nagle, Fiona Aherne, Lisa Fitzgerald, Collette Hawes.



Annie Foley, Alex Bowers, Peter Foley, Mary O'Keeffe, Eileen O'Connor, Carmel Fleming, Noreen Foley.



Derry Murphy, June Murphy, Una Fitzgerald, Jack Fitzgerald



Rebecca Lewis, Casey Lewis



Roisin Corr, Desmond McAuliffe, Johnny McAuliffe, Debbie Sheehy McAuliffe

How IKA volunteers help spread Organ Donor Awareness

Recently, three volunteers - **Frances Kendellen** (a transplant recipient) and 16-year-old **Kieran Harkins** (a dialysis patient) accompanied by his mother **Cer Harkins** (parent's perspective) had the wonderful opportunity, alongside the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) Cork Branch and Donor House volunteer representative, to meet and talk to over 200 students and teachers at Clonakilty Community College, Cork on organ donation awareness and share real life journeys.

By SARAH BUCHANAN

The focus of the visit to the school was to promote the importance of organ donation. We shared with teachers and student's what kidney disease is, how it affects patients as well as loved ones, treatment options, myths, facts and figures and ultimately how students and teachers can make an informed decision.

Together we discussed how to have the crucial conversation with loved ones about your wishes concerning organ donation -

#DontLeaveYourLovedOnesInDoubt

It was a lovely day with great engagement from students and teachers alike and we are very grateful to our wonderful volunteers who supported this.

In Ireland, with approximately 600 patients on the transplant waiting list, hoping for the 'gift of life', a single donor can save multiple lives by donating kidneys, liver, heart, lungs and pancreas.

Many people are unaware of the impact organ donation can have, and misconceptions often prevent individuals from signing up as donors. Hence, the IKA volunteers play an imperative role in spreading the awareness, knowledge and



Volunteers 'Have the Conversation' at Clonakilty Community College.

shared experience of organ donation.

THE ROLE OF IKA VOLUNTEERS IN AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

IKA volunteers play a vital role in raising awareness about organ donation across Ireland. Their dedication helps educate the public, dispel myths, and encourage people to sign up for organ donor cards while also starting meaningful conversations about the importance of organ donation and sharing one's wishes with loved ones.

Raising awareness about organ donor awareness is at the core of the IKA and the team at Donor

House actively supports and encourages volunteers with lived experience to share their stories and passion for organ donation.

Through the collective efforts of the IKA staff and volunteers, amplifying advocacy and awareness, spreading the crucial message, we see more people pausing to reflect on organ donation and having discussions with their families on their donation wishes.

HOW CAN VOLUNTEERS HELP IN AWARENESS

Distributing Organ Donor Cards

One of the most impactful ways volunteers promote organ donation is through the distribution of donor



Kieran Harkins, Geraldine Harkins, Frances Kendellen



Kieran Harkins

cards. By engaging with the public at community events and fundraisers, shopping centres, agricultural shows, and local gatherings, volunteers make it easy for people to decide to become an organ donor.

Community Events & Information Stalls

Many IKA Branches organise awareness events, including talks in schools referred to in this article which was held in Clonakilty Community College, workplaces, and public gatherings such as libraries, etc. Volunteers share real-life stories as transplant recipients, those

awaiting transplant and living donors and family members of deceased donors, thereby helping the community understand the life-changing effects of organ donation.

Social Media Advocacy

With the rise of social media platforms, IKA volunteers can help leverage social media campaigns to reach a wider audience. By resharing IKA posts on facts, patient testimonials, and kidney health, they help spark conversations and encourage people to discuss their organ donation wishes with their families.

Annual Organ Donor Awareness Week 10th – 17th May 2025

Each year, the Irish Kidney Association hosts Organ Donor Awareness Week, a national campaign that focuses on educating the public about the importance of organ donation. Volunteers play a key role here, maximising outreach by telling their personal stories which engages the public, drives awareness and garners substantial media coverage which leads to an increase uptake in organ donor cards.

Addressing Myths & Misconceptions

A significant part of the IKA's awareness efforts is tackling common myths about organ

donation. Some people believe they are too old to be donors, while others worry about religious or medical concerns. Volunteers can help debunk these myths, providing accurate information and encouraging informed decision-making.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED

Becoming a volunteer with the IKA is a meaningful way to make a difference. Whether through fundraising, supporting national or local awareness campaigns, personal storytelling or simply encouraging friends and family to carry a donor card, volunteers can play a key role in promoting organ donation.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO HELP, CONSIDER SIGNING UP AS AN IKA VOLUNTEER

Our volunteers, supported by the IKA Volunteer Team, from Donor House, participate in a wide range of activities such as distributing donor cards in their local area, setting up information stands, sharing their personal kidney story with other volunteers at an awareness event, or by supporting Branch-led local Organ Donor Awareness Week activities.

For more information simply email: volunteer@ika.ie

We'd love to hear from you. You can make a difference!

Professor JIM EGAN

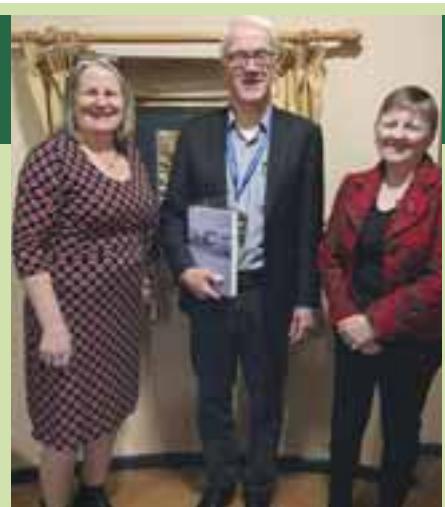
The National Organ Donation and Transplant Office was established in 2011 in response to an EU Directive about the need to establish quality standards and protocols for the entire solid organ donation/transplantation process.

Prof. Jim Egan (Respiratory Consultant in the Mater Hospital with a sub-specialty in Lung Transplantation) was appointed the first Director of the office which subsequently became the Organ Donation and Transplant Ireland (ODTI) office. Over the course of his tenure Prof. Egan was central to the development of organ donation and transplant structures as we know them in Ireland today.

In October 2023 Prof. Egan

stepped down from his role as Director of ODTI after over a decade leading the service. The Irish Kidney Association would like to acknowledge Prof. Egan for his ground-breaking work in developing the much-needed structures around the whole area of organ donation and transplantation.

Prof. Egan was always willing to listen to the experience of the Association when it came to the promotion and development of organ donation and transplantation. There may not always have been agreement but there was always respect and that is very much appreciated. With a real talent for speaking with empathy in public settings, Prof. Egan was a regular at



At a presentation by the IKA to Prof. Egan were: Liz O'Sullivan, IKA Director; Prof. Jim Egan; Carol Moore, IKA CEO.

the official launch of Organ Donor Awareness Week and he also spoke at many other IKA events over the years.

We thank Prof. Egan for his sterling work and wish him well in his future endeavours.



Runners spread out over the town of Dungarvan
Photo: Anthony Foley.

The 33rd John Treacy Dungarvan 10 Mile Road Race held on February 2nd 2025, was an unforgettable event, marking a milestone for the race, which has become the largest 10-mile road race in Ireland.

The day began with excitement as two course records were broken – both the men's and women's records were substantially lowered, with athletes running the fastest 5-mile times seen in Ireland in over five years.

Record breaking 33rd annual John Treacy Dungarvan 10-mile Road Race

The town of Dungarvan buzzed with energy as participants and visitors filled the streets. The race's success is attributed to years of hard work by West Waterford Athletic Club along with support from numerous organisations.

Despite unpredictable weather, the conditions were perfect for racing, with clear skies and ideal temperatures by the time the race began.

The race was supported by several sponsors, including Flahavans, Nike Ireland, and AIB Bank, among others,



*Joe Moynihan, Liam O'Donnell, WWAC, Frances Moynihan.
Photo courtesy of John Troy.*

as well as local businesses that played a crucial role in the event's success.

Athletes from all over Ireland competed, with Fearghal Curtin from Youghal AC claiming first place in the men's race with a new course record of 00:47:42 and Niamh Allen, Leevale AC the first lady home with a new record time of 00:52:50.

The event saw outstanding performances across the board, and many participants achieved personal bests.

Thanks to the volunteers, stewards, sponsors, local authorities, and club members, the event was a resounding success.

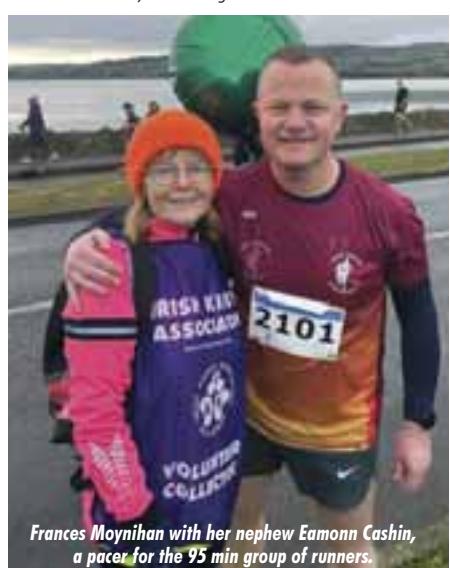
The 33rd John Treacy Dungarvan 10-mile Road Race was another unforgettable day for the community.

For the 10th year this year monies from the race were donated to a charity, with the Irish Kidney Association Waterford Branch, the chosen charity for 2025.

We are very grateful to the runners, who through their generosity, saw donations resulting in a €5,000 cheque being presented to the Branch.

Frances Moynihan (Branch Treasurer) with her husband Joe, along with Karyn Moynihan and her husband Aengus Mitchell, were there to represent the Branch on the morning.

On behalf of the Waterford Branch IKA we acknowledge the huge effort by the WWAC committee in organising such a successful event. We were honoured and privileged to be able to represent the Branch (especially in our hometown). Both Joe and I were at



Frances Moynihan with her nephew Eamonn Cashin, a pacer for the 95 min group of runners.



(L-R): Aengus Mitchell, Frances Moynihan, Eileen Brennan (Graiguenamanagh), Karyn and Joe Moynihan

the starting line to see off the 3,500+ runners. We were also at the finish line holding the tape as Fergal and Niamh crossed over with new course record times.

We were also delighted to link up with two runners who wore the IKA t-shirts on the day and were fundraising for the IKA.

Shane Power from Dungarvan, whose mam Mary is on dialysis in UHW ran a great race as did Ellen Brennan from Graiguenamanagh. Her brother-in-law Derek Ryan is on the transplant list. Both runners were very grateful for the various supports offered to their relatives by the IKA.



At the cheque presentation were (l-R): Susan O'Mahoney, Jacinta Shiel WWAC, Joe and Frances Moynihan, Billy Ryan, and Tom Leahy WWAC Chairman. Photo: DC Images

Golf Club presents over €26,000 to IKA

Established in 1992, St. Margaret's **Golf & Country Club** is a privately-owned club in North County Dublin. Each year the members of the club, which exceeds 850 men and women today, nominate a charity whom they support through fundraising drives throughout the year.

In the nine years since Synergy Golf took over the management and maintenance of the Club, the Club has raised more than €275,000 for various charities.

This year the incoming Captains Ward Frisby and Phil Horan proposed the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) as the members charity for 2024.

Captain Ward Frisby's mother Vera, a kidney transplant recipient and past national Chairman of the IKA Waterford Branch passed away last year after decades of tireless dedication to the charity.

Ward Frisby (Captain) with Desy Haughton, Geoffrey McCormack and Garret Lally.



As novice volunteers for a charitable organisation both Lady Captain Phil Hogan and I were initially overwhelmed by

the immediate support from within the IKA, and from within our own membership base, for example through IKA member and St. Margaret's Club member Brian Carney, a kidney transplant recipient.

This became a theme of the year for us, in meeting with members and supporters of our charity drives who had firsthand or associated experience with renal failure. It will also be the key learning for us, awareness and publicity can be as important as fundraising for charitable organisations such as the IKA.

Our golfing year began in blustery and

wet conditions for our drive-in, but we were ably supported by Lisa Fitzgerald and Colin White from the IKA's Donor House and Brian Carney, who introduced the organisation and its work, to the members.

Thankfully the weather improved as the year progressed and we hosted several hugely successful charity events.

In May, we held our first charity weekend of the year. For this event all proceeds from competition entries went directly to the charity fundraising, in addition to which the Captains were able to organise additional support through



L-R: Charlotte Frisby, Ward Frisby (Captain), Phil Hogan (Lady Captain), Lisa Fitzgerald (IKA Joint Fundraising Manager), Brian Carney (Dublin North Branch) and Eddie Frisby.



Phil Horan
(Lady Captain) with
Bernie Wall,
Sal McMahon and
Amanda Jones



Ward Frisby (Captain), Colin White, IKA National Advocacy & Projects Manager
and Phil Hogan (Lady Captain).

individual hole sponsorship and prize sponsorship.

In September the club held its annual PGA Pro-Am. For any readers not familiar with golfing parlance, this is a competition format where a professional golfer plays in a team competition with three amateurs.

Somewhat different to the members charity weekend, entry for this event must go towards paying Golf Ireland and the Professionals, as it is part of their calendar of events through the year. However, the Captains are again afforded the opportunity to separately organise charity donations through sponsorship opportunities.

In addition to all the corporate support received for individual hole sponsorship we were delighted that Pinergy Energy generously offered

to be title sponsors for the event. This was the first year in some time that our club charity was supported by a title corporate sponsor.

Our final members charity weekend took place in October. We were once again overwhelmed by the generosity of our membership base in sponsoring holes and prizes.

It was held over the bank holiday weekend, and in some instances, we received sponsorship from members who were unable to play due to family commitments but still wanted to support.

Outside of these key events, in each week of normal club competitions a portion of the overall prize pot goes towards the nominated charity, and at various locations around the club house and restaurant we placed

charity buckets with QR code options for contributing.

We also saw some very innovative and unique events; such was the energy and willingness of people to support your great cause. Our ladies club organised an event at Christmas where they gathered to sell golf merchandise among themselves, with all proceeds donated.

Maybe an unused top or accessory won at a competition or a birthday present from an over enthusiastic grandchild!!

Our golf management team also made the decision to donate the equivalent value of monies raised from the deposit return scheme. These were just some of the individual events organised.

In all, we were delighted at the end of the year to be able to present the IKA

with a cheque for €26,285. Colin White, the IKA's National Advocacy & Projects Manager, joined us in the club ahead of our Annual Members Meeting for a small presentation. We really are in awe of the commitment and professionalism shown by your organisation.

We, and our members, are now equally more alert to the work you do and the importance of awareness.

Phil and I, on behalf of the members and management, hope that we have in some way helped on that front and hope to continue to support you individually in the years to come.

For more information on Synergy Golf, St Margarets Golf and Country Club or Pinergy Energy, visit www.synergygolf.ie or www.stmargaretsgolf.com or www.pinergy.ie

QUIZ TIME

Get ready to test your wit with a brief mental workout as quizmaster Paul Donohoe, Chairman, Cavan/Monaghan Branch IKA, invites our readers to tackle the following ten questions (answers below opposite).

1. Name the Irish Olympian who recently won the final of the RTE series *Dancing With the Stars*?
2. 2024 was a 'leap year', when will the next leap year occur?
3. Which song was Rod Stewart's first solo number 1 single in the UK?
4. According to the World Trade Organisation, which country was the largest exporter of coffee in 2024?
5. Celebrity TV chef Nevin Maguire is a native of which Irish county?
6. KIA cars originate from which country?
7. Who was the third astronaut to walk on the moon?
8. What was the name of the devastating storm that affected most of the country in January?
9. Name the politician who recently succeeded Justin Trudeau as Prime Minister of Canada?
10. Stableford rules are used in which sport?

7. Charles, Pete, Conrad Jr.; 8. Eowyne; 9. Mark Carmey; 10. Golf.
1. Charles, Pete, Conrad Jr.; 2. 2028; 3. Maggie May; 4. Brazil; 5. Co. Cavan; 6. South Korea;

Darts fundraiser hits the bullseye for IKA

In October 2024, Hannah Dermody, a 30-year-old dialysis patient from Freshford, Co. Kilkenny, who was thrust into the world of kidney failure at just 11-years-old, spearheaded a successful Darts fundraiser, that raised over €7,000 for the Irish Kidney Association (IKA).



Hannah Dermody with Darts champion Ricky Evans.

By GWEN O'DONOCHUE

Hannah has been receiving nightly dialysis treatment for the past nine years, when the kidney transplant she received when she was 19 failed after two years.

Hannah's family's gratitude to the Irish Kidney Association for their continued support during her and other kidney patient's health journey was the inspiration for the fundraiser for the Association.

Central to the Darts Fundraiser's success were professional darts champions Alan Soutar and Ricky Evans, who had travelled from the UK to play against local participants. Their presence brought excitement and star power to the fundraiser, thrilling

fans young and old.

The fundraiser was hosted in her family's pub, McGrath's Bar, run by Hannah's mother Philomena and her younger brother Jack. They, along with her other brother Sam, enthusiastically helped out on the event night.

Supporting Hannah in planning and organising the fundraiser was her older brother Paul, who, along with four of his friends – locals Niall Kenny, Ray Talis, Steven Farrell and his wife Aine – share a deep passion for darts.

This was their third consecutive year to organise a darts fundraiser, with proceeds from the previous two events also supporting charitable causes –

Kilkenny charity Teac Tam and the Motor Neuron Disease Association – both of which featured professional players from the UK.

For the darts fundraiser held in October 2024, locals had to raise a minimum of €100 for the chance to take on the professional players in darts, while adults and children alike enjoyed meeting their heroes, taking photos, and collecting autographs.

The fundraiser's total proceeds were raised through sponsorship cards, an online fundraising platform, a bucket collection at the local MACE store, and a bucket collection and raffle on the event night.

Hannah shared, "Since I

was eleven, my life has revolved around kidney disease. But I try to stay hopeful for a second transplant and make the most of what I can do."

The darts fundraiser showcased not only Hannah's resilience but also her dedication to giving back to the IKA which has supported her and countless other kidney patients and their families.

Hannah, grateful for the generosity of locals towards the fundraiser, explained, "The community of Freshford was amazing and I want to thank them for their support and generosity. The funds raised will go towards the vital services provided by the IKA, the charity which helps kidney patients like me and their families in

communities across Ireland."

A cheque to the amount of €7,075, the valued proceeds from the very successful fundraiser, was presented by Hannah to the IKA Kilkenny Branch.

Hannah's journey with kidney disease began at the age of 11 when high protein levels in her urine led to a diagnosis. Doctors discovered that she had only one kidney, which was functioning at just 30%.

During her teenage years, Hannah attended regular renal appointments and frequently stayed at St. Luke's and Crumlin Children's Hospital. At age 16, she transitioned to adult care at Waterford University Hospital (WUH).

When her kidney function dropped to about 10%, she had no choice but to start dialysis to survive. In her late teens she began peritoneal dialysis (PD), a treatment she underwent every night.

In 2012, Hannah's life took a positive turn when she received a kidney transplant. She remains deeply grateful to the family of the deceased donor for their selfless gift.



Owen Hanrahan, Seamus Carrigan, representing the Kilkenny IKA Branch with Hannah Dermody and Aine Farrell

Unfortunately, the transplant lasted only two years, after which she had to return to dialysis.

For the past nine years, Hannah's life has revolved around nightly PD treatments at home lasting up to 10 hours. These treatments have often been complicated by infections at the site where her PD line connects to her body.

As these infections persist, her renal team has prepared her for the possibility of transitioning to haemodialysis. Unlike PD, haemodialysis will take place in a hospital three

times a week, with each session lasting three to four hours. A fistula has already been inserted in preparation for this change in treatment.

When her recurring line infections are under control, Hannah hopes to be accepted onto the transplant waiting list, giving her hope for another chance at a better quality of life.

Despite these challenges, Hannah maintains a positive outlook. She works part-time in her local Loop Café and helps out in her

mother's bar.

Undeterred by the extra luggage of her PD dialysis machine, Hannah has enjoyed holidays provided by the IKA in their holiday homes in Kerry and Waterford. For the past two years, her machine has accompanied her to Lanzarote, where she hooked up to it at night for her vital, life-saving treatment.

Hannah's story is a testament to the power of community, determination, and hope, inspiring others to rally around those affected by kidney disease.

Great news from Kidney BEAM

Their new prehabilitation programmes – designed to help people set to receive a kidney transplant prepare for surgery by improving physical, nutritional and mental health – are now available for patients on the Kidney Beam platform.



WHAT DO THE PROGRAMMES INCLUDE?

The programmes include 24 movement sessions, plus 20 education classes, over 12 weeks.

They have created one tailored programme for those on haemodialysis/peritoneal dialysis, and one for those who are not.

Content includes:

- A mixture of strength and cardio exercises
- Exercise techniques and adaptations
- Q&As with a transplant nurse and surgeon on preparing for treatment
- Sessions on mental health, depression, anxiety and sleep.

WHERE TO FIND THE PROGRAMMES

Go to www.kidneybeam.com, click on 'Programmes' in the navigation bar, then scroll to the 'Prehab: Getting ready for a transplant' options.

Kidney Beam is available **free** to use for kidney patients in Ireland, thanks to on-going programme support from the Punchestown Kidney Research Fund (www.pkrf.ie).



Transplant Sport Ireland

Friday, December 6th 2024 was a historic day for Transplant Sport Ireland (TSI) with an official handover of the Sports Programme from the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) which managed it for over three decades.

IKA CEO Carol Moore signing official documents with Harry White, Team Manager, Transplant Sport Ireland.
Pic: Robbie Reynolds



Back row (L-R): Colin White, IKA; Pat O'Sullivan, Mike Keohane; Brian Carney; Mick Dwyer; Olive Cummins (IKA, Chair of Alignment Group); (front): Dee Keohane, Harry Ward (TSI Team Manager), Aoife O'Gorman. Pic: Robbie Reynolds.

TSI committee members attended Donor House where Team Manager Harry Ward and IKA CEO Carol Moore signed official documents making TSI the representative body for transplant sport in Ireland with the World Transplant Games Federation and the European Transplant and Dialysis Sports Federation.

TSI would like to thank all those members involved in the process over the last two and a half years, expertly led by Olive Cummins, Chair of Alignment Group, IKA and assisted by TSI's Chair, Trevor Lynch with

Harry Ward and Mike Keohane as well as out-going Transplant Team Ireland Manager, Colin White (IKA).

This begins an exciting era with an athlete-led organisation.

Visit to Áras an Uachtaráin



Transplant Sport Ireland athletes and supporters meet President Higgins.

TSI athletes and supporters had the pleasure of meeting President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins and his wife Sabine in Áras an Uachtaráin on Monday, December 16th. The group of 28 included liver, kidney, bone marrow and double lung transplant recipients along with members of the U18s Transplant Sport Ireland team and the Living Donor team. The morning began with a photo opportunity outside the beautiful historic building. This was followed by a very informative tour of the

beautiful rooms, all fabulously decorated for Christmas.

Afternoon tea was served and the group then met with the President who acknowledged the great success of the group at the European Transplant Sports Championships in Lisbon in August 2024 and at the British Transplant Games held in Nottingham last year, where athletes, including U18s enjoyed remarkable success. The President spoke to the Team, and they then also had the pleasure of meeting Sabine Higgins.

TSI Membership

February was Membership month for TSI athletes and supporters and we are delighted to have well over 100 athletes signed up to date. A dedicated Members WhatsApp has been set up for team information and updates. Whilst the initial closing date has passed, if you are interested in joining TSI, you can always contact us at transplantsportireland@gmail.com for details on how to join.

Training/Meet-Ups 2025

TSI held its first Training/Meet-up in Kilcullen Community Centre, Co. Kildare on Sunday January 12th. The morning began with an introduction from TSI Team Manager Harry Ward welcoming all present which included several new members. Each athlete then shared their own inspirational story with the group. Some athletes were liver recipients – others heart, kidney, and pancreas along with those currently on dialysis.



Transplant Sport Ireland first Training/Meet-Up in Kilcullen Community Hall.

It was obvious there was a shared story of courage, gratitude and celebration for the 'gift of life'.

Coaching was provided for basketball, badminton, pétanque and football. With over 35 people attending, it was a great start to the sporting year.

The next Training/Meet-up was in Nenagh on February 9th with training for TSI footballers. March's Training/Meet-up took place on Sunday March 3rd in Nenagh and it was great to see new members taking part in football, athletics, pétanque and darts.

TSI held its next Training/Meet-up in Kilcullen on March 23rd and for April, TSI is heading to Carlow Triathlon Club on Sunday 13th.

These are a great way to meet those who have had similar transplant and/or dialysis journeys and are a great way to support each other and celebrate living a full life through sport.

TSI Football Training

TSI Football is looking forward to the Inaugural European Transplant Football Championships to be held in Oxford in early April. Training for this has already begun. TSI would like to thank the coaches from Kilcullen and Nenagh FC who are volunteering their time.

The first official event was a challenge match against Northern Ireland on March 8th in the AUL



Transplant Sport Ireland footballers: (Back): JP O'Neill, Patrick O'Driscoll, Oisin O'Gorman, Mike Keohane, Peter O'Reilly. (Front): Liam Patterson (Captain), Tim Lion and Val Weblin.

Complex, Dublin. The game started with a thirty second silence to remember all donors.

Captain Liam Patterson led the Irish guys out in a fast frantic start to the match and encouraged the team all the way. Despite pressures from Northern Ireland, a cracking goal from Oisin O'Gorman gave TSI the lead. Tim Lion played some excellent football up front as did Peter O'Reilly and Val Weblin, all of whom had great touches. John Paul O'Neill had some outstanding defending as did Mike Keohane and this along with some outstanding saves by goalie Patrick O'Driscoll frustrated the opposition. With superb team play from all the lads, Team Ireland dug in and another great O'Gorman goal sealed the victory with the final score 2-1 to TSI.

It was a superb win for their first competitive match, but it's not about winning, the real winner was the celebration of life through sport and the very obvious message that organ donation works!

British Transplant Games (BGT)

(<https://www.britishtransplantgames.co.uk/>)

Registration is now open for the BGT which will take place in Oxford from Thursday 31st July – Sunday 3rd August. This is a good opportunity for athletes to take part in a weekend of competition.

There are 26 sports on offer, as well as competitions for U18 and Living Donors. It's no wonder over 1,000 people enjoy this event annually! The Games seek to acknowledge and celebrate donor families and aim to demonstrate the benefits of transplantation, encouraging transplant patients to regain fitness, whilst increasing public awareness of the need for more people to have the conversation about organ donation.

If you are interested in joining TSI contact transplantsportireland@gmail.com

World Transplant Games (WTG)

(<https://wtg2025.com/>)

The WTG will be held in Dresden, Germany from August 17th-24th 2025 where Athletes and teams from over 60 countries will meet up for a week of competition and camaraderie. Athletes will compete in 17 different sports over 6 days. Registration is open until June 1st. Pop us an email on transplantsportireland@gmail.com if you are interested in being part of the Ireland team. We have over 30 registered so far but expect this to increase.

The WTG raises public awareness of the importance and benefits of organ donation by demonstrating the health and fitness that can be achieved post-transplant. All the athletes participating are ambassadors for the value of organ donation, striving towards full rehabilitation through exercise, camaraderie and healthy living, and giving hope to people on transplant waiting lists all around the world.

The WTG offers recipients a way of saying 'thank you' to those who made it all possible – living and deceased donors, their families, health professionals, researchers, carers and everyone who supported them on this journey. Without them, there would be nobody on the starting line.

Organ Donor Awareness

TSI is looking forward to supporting the Irish Kidney Association's Organ Donor Awareness Week that takes place on May 10-17th, 2025 and there will also be an opportunity for the team to participate in the Association's Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving for organ donors later in the year.

TSI encourages transplant recipients and those on dialysis to lead an active lifestyle, thereby celebrating the 'gift of life' through sport.

Most importantly, TSI is dedicated to raising awareness of organ donation and continuing to remember organ donors and their families.

Visit our social media and website transplantsportireland.ie

**Have the Conversation
– Say 'Yes' to Organ Donation!**

LOW SALT



The theme of World Kidney Day 2025 was 'Are your kidneys okay? – detect early and protect your kidneys'. One of the major risk factors for chronic kidney disease is hypertension, also known as high blood pressure. One of the simplest and most effective ways to maintain healthy blood pressure is to follow a low-salt diet.



WHAT IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SALT, BLOOD PRESSURE, AND KIDNEY HEALTH?

Consuming too much salt causes the body to retain excess fluid, leading to increased blood volume. This added volume raises blood pressure, forcing the kidneys to work harder to filter the blood. Over time, this strain can damage the kidneys and contribute to the development or progression of chronic kidney disease (CKD).

Research indicates that reducing salt intake can significantly lower blood pressure and decrease protein excretion in the urine, a marker of kidney damage.

HOW MUCH SALT DO IRISH PEOPLE CONSUME?

Irish studies over the last decade noted that the average daily salt consumption in Ireland was approx. 10g per adult. The recommendation is a maximum of 6g salt per adult.

A recent study in 2022 (The National Adult Nutrition Survey II) indicated a decrease in average daily salt intake to 9.5g in Irish males and 7.5g in Irish females. Despite this improvement, these levels still surpass the recommended maximum daily intakes.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A LOW-SALT DIET?

Following a low-salt diet offers numerous health benefits, particularly for those concerned about kidney health. Reducing salt intake helps decrease blood pressure, lessening the strain on your kidneys and reducing the risk of CKD progression.

Less salt means less fluid retention, which can reduce swelling and decrease the workload on your heart and kidneys.

Lower blood pressure and reduced fluid retention contribute to better heart health, decreasing the risk of heart disease and stroke.

WHAT EASY STEPS CAN I TAKE TO REDUCE MY SALT INTAKE?

- 1. Choose fresh, unprocessed foods:** Processed and convenience foods often contain high levels of added salt. Opt for fresh fruits, vegetables, lean meats, and whole grains to naturally reduce your salt intake.
- 2. Cook at home:** Preparing meals at home allows you to control the amount of salt used. Experiment with herbs, spices, garlic, ginger, onions, vinegars, lemon, or lime juice to enhance flavour without adding salt.

By **ELAINE CAFFREY**

Dietitian in Renal Disease, Mater Hospital
on behalf of the Renal Interest Group
of the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI)

INDI  **RENAL**
Irish Nutrition +
Dietetic Institute

3. Avoid adding salt at the table:

Train your palate to enjoy the natural flavours of food without adding extra salt. It may take a few weeks for your taste buds to adjust, but soon you'll appreciate the true taste of your meals.

4. Be wary of salt substitutes:

Some salt substitutes contain high levels of potassium, which may not be suitable for individuals with kidney issues. Consult your healthcare provider before using them.

5. Read food labels:

Pay attention to food labels and choose products labelled as low-sodium or no added salt. Be cautious of items with high salt content, even if they don't taste particularly salty.

HOW MUCH SALT SHOULD YOU HAVE EACH DAY?

The average adult is recommended to have no more than 6g of salt or 2.4g of sodium per day. The easiest way to know if a product is high in salt is to check the food label (nutritional information) on the packaging. You need to check how much salt is in the product per 100g.

The Irish Heart Foundation has produced a useful resource available for download on their website to allow you to identify if a food is high, medium or low in salt.

WHAT ARE SOME EASY SWAPS I COULD MAKE TODAY?

Meat and meat products are the food types that contribute the most salt in the Irish diet as per 2024 population data. High salt meat products include ham, bacon, rashers, sausages, black and white pudding, salami, corned beef, pâté and meat pies.

Instead, why not try to eat fresh cuts of meats such as beef, pork, lamb, chicken and turkey. To make these fresh meats tastier, use herbs, spices, garlic, lemon, lime or vinegar to season them.

You can also try the low salt curry sauce recipe below!

If you are looking for more inspiration for seasoning foods, see The Irish Kidney Diet recipe section! - www.irishkidneydiet.ie/recipe

Remember, making gradual changes to your diet can lead to sustainable habits that support your kidney health. Consult with a healthcare professional or a renal dietitian to create a personalised plan that meets your nutritional needs while protecting your kidneys.

By embracing a low-salt diet, you're taking a proactive step toward maintaining healthy blood pressure and preserving your kidney function for years to come.

A product LOW IN SALT contains less than 0.3g salt per 100g of the product

A product MEDIUM IN SALT is between 0.3g and 1.5g salt per 100g of the product

A product HIGH IN SALT is more than 1.5g salt per 100g of the product

LOW SALT CURRY SAUCE

(makes 100mls, serves 4 people)

Recipe from 'Truly Tasty' cookbook compiled by Valerie Twomey page 52

Ingredients:

1 tbsp. olive oil
26g of onion, chopped
60g of tomatoes, chopped
½ garlic clove, crushed
2 level tsp. mild curry powder
100mls chicken stock (use ¼ of a low-salt chicken stock cube to 100mls of water) use suitable stock cube, ask your Dietitian for a suitable stock cube choice
50g of Bramley apple, peeled and cored and chopped
50ml of Crème fraîche

To make the sauce:

Heat the oil in a heavy-based pot and add the onion and garlic to soften, then add the curry powder, tomato and apple, reduce the heat and cook lightly for 5 minutes. Add the stock, increase the heat and cook for 8 minutes or until half the liquid has evaporated. Next add the crème fraîche, bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes.

Removed from the heat, pass through a fine strainer into a clean pan. Reheat when ready to serve.

Delicious served with grilled meat such as chicken!

NOTE: Per portion, this recipe provides half daily vegetable allowance.

ACCOMMODATION BOOKINGS

If you require overnight accommodation at the CLAYTON HOTEL, Dublin

PHONE: 01 690 8887

or

MUNSTER KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE, Cork

PHONE: 021-2044555

PHONELINE OPENING HOURS FOR CLAYTON HOTEL, DUBLIN AIRPORT

Mon – Fri: 9.30am – 7.00pm

For Emergency Bookings:

Sat – Sun and Bank Holidays
12.00pm – 4.00pm

Please be sure to phone the IKA Renal Support Centre staff as soon as you know of your hospital appointment.

OPENING HOURS MUNSTER KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE, CORK

Drop-in:

Mon – Fri: 9.30am - 6.00pm

Phone lines open:

Mon – Fri: 9.30am – 7.00pm

For emergency bookings:

Sat - Sun and Bank Holidays
12.00pm – 4.00pm

SUPPORT MAGAZINE WINTER PRIZE WINNERS

The winners of the Winter Giveaway of a **€75 Gift Card**, courtesy of **One4All** were:

Michael Dwyer,
Glenageary, Co. Dublin

Patricia Griffin,
Castlemaine, Co. Kerry

Celine Tuite, Tara, Co. Meath
Maura Conlon,
Geevagh, Co. Sligo



By CARRIE McMULLAN
Communications Executive

SOCIAL MEDIA & COMMUNICATION



Embracing Collaboration

Time. Funding. Resources. These are three key words used to describe the challenges that communications teams across charities face on a daily basis.

In February of this year, The Wheel, Ireland's national association of community and voluntary organisations, launched their **Communications Member Network**. This was an opportunity for communications professionals from all levels of charity and non-profit organisations to come together and set an agenda for shaping the future of the sector.

CURRENT LANDSCAPE OF DIGITAL MEDIA IN CHARITIES

Digital media has become the main form of communication for charities. It has grown as a powerful tool in advocacy and fundraising with both social media platforms and

email acting as important channels in digital marketing.

Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn continue to be key platforms for charities while X has started to drop off due to the controversial opinion of the platform, leading to new platforms such as Bluesky finding room to move in.

Within social media platforms, new tools continue to be developed to help reduce the workload of communications teams, such as the introduction of the AI-based "Advantage" ad suite for Meta campaigns. This allows the Meta algorithm to identify potential people who may match your current engaged audiences and represents a shift towards AI becoming a greater assistant to communications professionals.

As social media platforms become more nuanced, the demographics

that use them become more distinct. It is well accepted that Facebook is not as regularly used, and Instagram is the primary platform for communicating short informative clips to our communities. You will find opinions on current affairs on X whereas you network for business connections on LinkedIn.

Each of these platforms consequently has their own persona and a communications team must decide how they speak to each of these personas.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

The challenges that are presented in all this come back to those key words: time, funding, resources. The decisions of which social media platforms to join or leave, learning the ways of new AI-led tools and planning effective communication to each of your audiences require

careful consideration. Oftentimes when we think of teams, we think of a large group of people, but it is more common than not for communications teams to be made up of one or two people.

This is where a forum such as the Communications Member Network becomes paramount. The launch of Network brought about discussion on the things that were working well and the things that weren't within charity communications with the overlying question of: "What is the solution?" The ultimate suggestion was 'collaboration'. Charities, by their very nature, collaborate very well internally. Advocacy, fundraising and volunteering teams all instinctively work together to meet the organisation's goals. This works well for individual charity goals but for the bigger picture you need more force to make an impact. Charities often have similar goals when it comes to advocating for their members but rarely work on campaigning together.

As a member of the Communications Member Network, the Irish Kidney Association can collaborate with communications professionals from charities of different sizes, of different demographics and different levels of digital literacies. In this way we can learn from the charities that came before us and teach the charities that came after. The two-person charity communications team may become a thing of the past, opening the door to a network of hundreds.

The landscape of digital media for charities and non-profits is changing which presents both challenges and opportunities for communications teams. Adapting to new technologies and platforms while managing constraints is no small feat. However, by leveraging collaborative networks like The Wheel's initiative, charities can not only navigate but thrive in this dynamic environment.

What this means for you? By working with a vast network of expertise, we can learn how the ever-evolving digital space can be best used for communication in areas of health, patient support and advocacy which will help us maintain a better ongoing connection with our membership by fostering a more informed and supported community.

Volunteering as a Peer Supporter

– MY EXPERIENCE –

In May 2022 I read in SUPPORT magazine that the Irish Kidney Association was seeking expressions of interest for a new Peer Support Scheme they were setting up. I applied, went through the interview process and was accepted onto the scheme.

The next step was an overnight two-day induction / training session at a Dublin hotel. The training was excellent – very professionally prepared and delivered. There were about a dozen of us, and apart from the training itself, it was a great opportunity for us to get to know each other. Between us, we had experienced a whole range of kidney illnesses and treatments, so we instantly had that bond in common. This helped me to realise the intrinsic value of Peer Support – being with people who 'get it', people who understand.

We had further one-day training sessions, all of which intensified our understanding of the process and added to the confidence we had already gained.

The service was launched in 2023. How does it work? People with kidney disease (or a family member needing support) apply to the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) to be matched with a peer. This matching process is managed very carefully by the IKA's Counselling Service. The Peer and the PSV (Peer Support Volunteer) are scheduled for six weekly sessions, which are 100% confidential and take place by Zoom. Most of these sessions run without a hitch, although there can be the odd technical problem with



wifi, etc., but nothing insurmountable.

Another issue that can arise is that a peer may have to withdraw due to health problems, family reasons, work commitments, etc.

The service is very flexible, and we understand that people can have a lot of conflicting

stuff going on in their lives. The issue can also be with the PSV. For example, I had a kidney transplant last year and obviously was unavailable for some time. During that period, I got to understand, first-hand, the value of having peer support. My fellow volunteers were a wonderful, empathetic support for me, as they understood my situation in a way that medical experts can't, because they usually haven't had a transplant themselves.

This is part of what makes Peer Support special. We are not medical experts, but we understand what people are going through.

In conclusion, I would heartily encourage anyone, whether a kidney patient or a family member, or indeed a person who feels they would like to be a PSV, to contact the IKA and let them know. Don't hesitate! This is a brilliant, free service, and the feedback from people who have availed of it is excellent.

JOAN

The Irish Kidney Association gratefully acknowledges the support of **Punchestown Kidney Research Fund (PKRF)**, the major funder for the provision of the Peer Support programme.

Patient-Reported Outcomes in Glomerular Disease: PRO-GD

By supporting and getting actively involved in research, patients can help shape the future of treatment, benefiting themselves and generations to come. At a recent conference that brought together patients, patient advocates and healthcare professionals, speaking about the importance of patient involvement in research, a patient introduced her session by stating a very simple fact. She said, "I am alive and here today to talk with you because patients who came before me were willing to engage with, and support research that led to the development of the treatments that mean that my illness can now be managed, and my quality of life is excellent."



By **MICHELLE O'SHAUGHNESSY**
Consultant Nephrologist
Galway University Hospital
& Honorary Senior Lecturer
University of Galway



This is at the core of why the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) included the theme, Researching, Campaigning and Advocacy and the objective, deliver patient-centred research, in its 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. The often-used phrase, 'nothing about us, without us', is very much applicable in this context.

The Association is supporting Dr. O'Shaughnessy's research because it is 'patient-centred', bringing in the lived experience of people with glomerular disease to inform how it can best be managed. We asked her about this research.

WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH ABOUT?

Patient-Reported Outcomes in Glomerular Disease (PRO-GD) is a research study aiming to develop a new questionnaire to capture how patients with glomerular diseases (also known as nephritis, glomerulonephritis or nephrotic syndrome) feel and function. Glomerular diseases develop when a person's immune system attacks their kidney filters (glomeruli), resulting in leakage of protein or blood

into the urine and, over time, a decline in kidney function.

The PRO-GD questionnaire will help doctors caring for patients with glomerular diseases, and researchers studying glomerular diseases, to more easily capture and measure the effects of glomerular diseases on the daily lives of patients.

In addition to getting blood and urine tests, patients could also be asked relevant questions about their symptoms, their emotions, and their ability to participate in family, work, and social life, allowing the patient voice to be better heard.

WHO CAN TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?

People from all over Ireland can take part in this research. Participants do not need to travel to take part: consent forms and questionnaires will be sent electronically or by post.

To take part in this research, participants must meet the following criteria:

1. Diagnosed with a glomerular disease like IgA nephropathy, focal segmental glomerulosclerosis

(FSGS), minimal change disease, membranous nephropathy, or membranoproliferative glomerulonephritis (MPGN).

2. No prior kidney transplant and not currently on dialysis
3. Aged 18 years or older
4. Proficient in the English language.

If you are unsure whether you qualify, you can talk to your nephrologist or contact our research team and we will help you to figure this out.

WHAT DOES TAKING PART IN THIS RESEARCH INVOLVE?

This research is all being carried out remotely, using electronic or paper-based questionnaires. If you are interested in taking part you can contact the research team at University of Galway to express your interest. You don't need to be referred by your doctor, you can self-refer.

After confirming that you are eligible to take part, our research team will send you a 'Patient Information Leaflet' (electronic or paper-based) describing the study. If you still wish to take part, you will then sign a consent form and return it online or by post to the research team.

Participants will then be sent two or three questionnaires over the course of 6 months: at the beginning (everyone), 2 weeks later (some people), and 6 months later (everyone).

The questionnaires ask about you, your kidney disease, and how you feel and function. Participants do not need to provide lab results, as they can be obtained by the research team with your consent. All information gathered by the research team will be kept confidential and stored anonymously.

Finally, you will be informed about the 'Living Well' programme, run by the IKA. This is a peer-led self-management programme that teaches patients how to manage

their disease better: participation in this programme is completely voluntary and separate from participation in the research.

WHO IS CARRYING OUT THIS RESEARCH?

I am a consultant nephrologist at University Hospital Galway (UHG) and am leading this study. I am supported by staff at the Health Research Board – Clinical Research Facility Galway (HRB-CRFG) and by an expert research team that includes patients with glomerular disease, a staff member of the IKA, and international experts in the field. The Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) advisory group for this project has been hugely influential in developing patient facing materials (e.g., consent forms, posters, flyers) and designing the study logo.



WHO IS FUNDING THIS RESEARCH?

This research is co-funded by the Health Research Board (HRB) and the Irish Kidney Association (IKA), as part of the Health Research Board – Health Research Charities Ireland (HRB-HRCI) joint funding scheme. This scheme provides a unique opportunity for the IKA to support research that aligns with the charity's goals and strategies, while benefiting from the experience and infrastructure of the HRB.

WHAT MOTIVATED THIS RESEARCH?

It struck me in my clinical and research practice that the main outcomes of glomerular disease clinical trials – and therefore the outcomes monitored in clinical practice – traditionally revolve around lab results. However, lab results don't capture the complete patient experience. What often matters more to patients are their physical symptoms, their emotional reaction to their disease, their worries for the future, and the impact their disease has on social, work and family life. Your 'patient-reported outcomes' are rarely collected in research or clinical practice, partly because nobody knows what to measure, or how.

PRO-GD aims to fill this gap, by developing a PRO-GD questionnaire that is carefully customised to the needs and priorities of patients with glomerular disease. If the PRO-GD questionnaire is shown to be valid and relevant in patients with glomerular disease living in Ireland, and later in other countries, your experiences could very quickly be adopted into clinical and research practice.

HOW CAN I HELP?

If you have one of the diseases included in this study, please get in touch with me and my research team to hear more about the study. If you know somebody with one of these diseases, please show them this article or direct them to the PRO-GD study website, so they can seek further information themselves.

**WE NEED
YOU**

PRO-GD needs to recruit at least 180 participants to be successful, so every person really does count!

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

🌐 <https://ika.ie/research/>
✉️ PROGD@universityofgalway.ie
☎️ 086-1992951 or ☎️ 086-2012270

Learning, Sharing and Networking

The importance of partnership

By COLIN WHITE, National Advocacy & Projects Manager

To ensure that the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) remains relevant in healthcare delivery and policy settings, it is important that time is invested in engaging with meetings and events that offer opportunities for meaningful learning, sharing, influencing and networking.

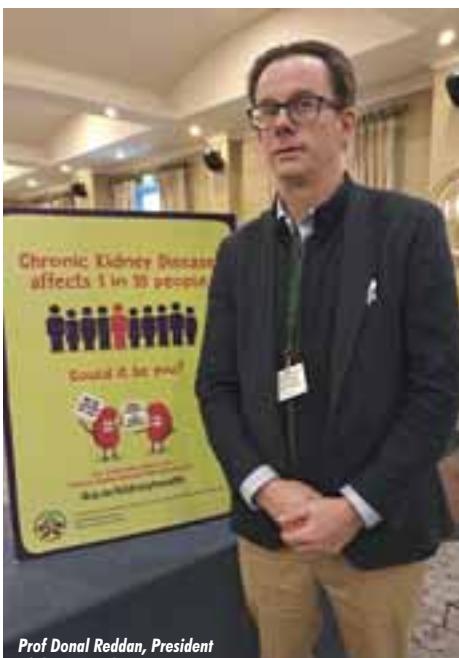
With the Association's emerging work in the area of chronic kidney disease, there is a growing need to focus on collaboration with other patient charities as there is significant crossover with areas such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and others.

With the increased focus on patient partnership in healthcare and research, it is important that the Association is engaged in the relevant forums to find out what this will mean going forward and also to influence developments.

Below is a summary of some of the recent engagement the Association has been involved in as part of its work in advocacy and education.



Prof Austin Stack speaking at the INS Winter Meeting in Galway.



Prof Donal Reddan, President of the INS at the INS Winter Meeting in Galway.



Michelle O'Shaughnessy speaking at the INS Winter Meeting in Galway.

IRISH NEPHROLOGY SOCIETY

In January, it was a pleasure to join the Winter Meeting of the Irish Nephrology Society in Galway, an excellent opportunity to hear about the latest issues in kidney healthcare and to also share about the Irish Kidney Association's plans for World Kidney Day and willingness to provide campaign materials for any hospitals putting on information stands for the Day.

THE NATIONAL OFFICE OF CLINICAL AUDIT (NOCA)

Their annual Conference was hosted by the RCSI in February as part of their Charter Week 2025. There was a presentation on the Potential Donor Audit that NOCA has responsibility for managing and just as importantly, there was an excellent opportunity to network with NOCA staff and staff from Organ Donation and Transplant Ireland.

Such networking is

invaluable as it allows for the sharing of perspectives which helps ensure that the IKA's advocacy is informed and relevant.

HSE NATIONAL PATIENT AND SERVICE USER FORUM

The forum comprises of individual patient advocates, family members, carers and supporters, as well as representatives of patient organisations, disability organisations, advocacy groups, and other special

interest groups.

Issues addressed by the forum include plans for patient and service user engagement, integrated care, digital health, and health regions. Members of the forum participate in co-design working groups, project oversight panels, programme advisory committees, and board sub-committees.

There was an in-person meeting in Dublin in February and an online meeting in March. Both

meetings provided an excellent opportunity to learn about 'the bigger picture' in healthcare in Ireland and understand where the issues and needs of people living with, and affected by kidney disease fit in.

The networking opportunities provided by the meeting in February led directly to an invitation to join a newly forming group of patient organisations that represent people living with lifelong conditions to look at issues of financial security, more particularly, the challenges involved in getting a mortgage. The logic being 'stronger together' as we advocate for change.

DISABILITY FEDERATION OF IRELAND MEMBERS POLICY AND ADVOCACY FORUM

It was good to join a meeting of this existing group in March as it offers a forum for networking and understanding shared advocacy issues. It was also a useful opportunity to flag the Irish Kidney Association's work around World Kidney Day given the crossover between chronic kidney disease, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension, and others.

THE WHEEL COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

The Wheel is the national network of community and voluntary organisations, charities and social enterprises in



Colin White, IKA National Advocacy & Projects Manager, Tiberius Pereira from Patients for Patient Safety Ireland (a kidney transplant recipient) at the NOCA Conference.

Ireland. They have established a new Network for the staff of charities who have responsibility for communications. The plan is to identify shared agendas and share best practice with the goal of collective improvement across the sector.

THE HEALTH PROMOTION ALLIANCE OF IRELAND

The Health Promotion Alliance Ireland is an all-island coalition with a shared interest in advocating for major policy change to promote the primary prevention of chronic disease. It comprises over twenty leading organisations. A future without preventable chronic disease.

In line with the changing landscape in healthcare, it is important that the IKA is playing its role in the bigger picture.

The Association has a role to play in advocating for people living with end stage kidney disease, supporting the development of services for the early identification and management of chronic kidney disease and ultimately, looking at how chronic disease can be prevented.

WE CANNOT DO IT ALONE

When looking at all the things that could and should be done in the area of chronic kidney disease, it is easy to be overwhelmed. The

Association does not have the resources to tackle all the areas. However, it is important to know that we do not have to do it alone. Such is why it is important to invest in partnerships with healthcare professionals and other patient organisations.

This work extends beyond Ireland to ensure that we have an understanding of what is happening in other countries and how such developments can help inform activity in Ireland.

The IKA has been a long time member of the **European Kidney Patients Federation (EKPF)** and we have also joined the more recently formed **Global Patient Alliance for Kidney Health (GloPAKH)**.

IN CONCLUSION

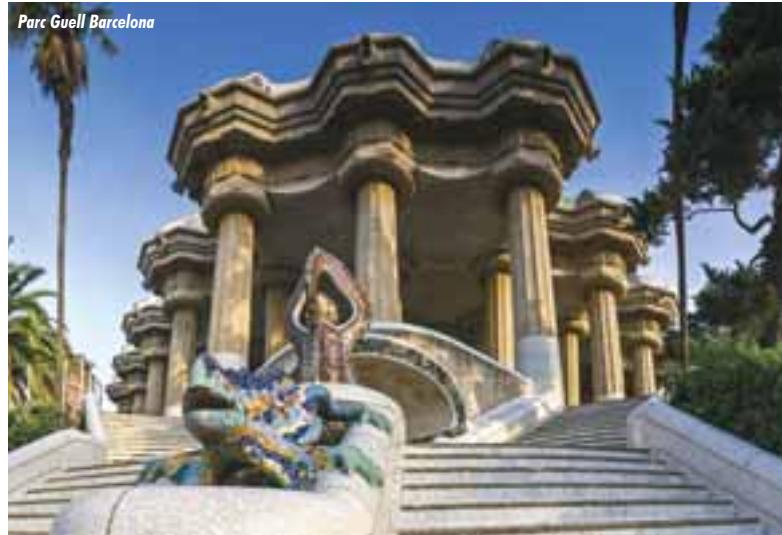
In 2024, a number of key milestones were achieved including the signing of the Human Tissue Act into law by the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, reporting from the pilot Potential Donor Audit and a commitment to developing an annual audit report as well as a commitment to include chronic kidney disease in the national Chronic Disease Management Programme.

Each of these milestones, is a commitment to change and in 2025 the IKA will be focused on ensuring that there is delivery on these commitments.

DO YOU HAVE AN UPCOMING EVENT OR FUNDRAISER?

We would be delighted to add it to the events calendar on our website - just email carrie@ika.ie with the details (including what type of event it is, where, when it will be held, ticket and price information).

Sun, Sea & Travel



Parc Güell Barcelona



By DEBORAH CERVI
Holiday Co-ordinator

SUN HOLIDAYS – the best places to go for sun, sea and sand and most importantly excellent dialysis units

In need of a sun holiday? It's time to top-up your vitamin D levels, dig out your bikini and board a plane to one of these sunny destinations.

SPAIN

Spain is always a hit but knowing exactly where to go can be tricky. But fear not, we have some of the best Spanish dialysis units that I would recommend for a sun holiday in Spain.

Whether it is time by the beach you crave, the chance to top-up your tan or simply just explore the wonderful sights you'll find exactly what you need.

The **Costa del Sol** is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. With such a wide range of facilities and attractions, there is something for everyone with miles of sandy beaches, fantastic

all year-round warmth keeps tourists flocking back year after year to **Torremolinos, Marbella, and Estepona**.

Torremolinos is a modern city preserving the great charms of the Andalusian tradition. Here visitors enjoy more than 300 sunny days every year. Diaverum Torremolinos is the dialysis unit and its conveniently located within 15 minutes by car of local attractions such as Sea Life Benalmadena, Crocodile Park and Parc de la Paloma. El Bajondillo beach – all are only a 15-minute walk from the dialysis unit. **Estepona** is an idyllic town surrounded by both the Mediterranean and the mountains on the Costa del Sol in southern Spain. The white-walled town centre has many shops and picturesque squares.

Estepona is renowned for its beaches, which stretch along some 21 km of coastline. Estepona is a popular year-round holiday destination and has a micro-climate with over 325 days of sunshine per year.

There are plenty of restaurants and water sports facilities of Puerto Deportivo, plus a fishing port and the cove of Playa del Cristo. Diaverum

Estepona is the dialysis unit and it is only 1.3km from the promenade the Paseo Marítimo, which runs next to the Playa de la Rada beach.

Marbella is perfect for those looking for a sun-soaked holiday, with easy beach access and also a little added luxury. If you want a golf and spa resort holiday, Marbella has it all!

So, if you are looking to sample the Costa del Sol, Marbella is the town for you! The dialysis unit is in Hospital Quiron Marbella. It has a prime seafront location, is situated next to Marbella's fishing port, and provides a spectacular view of the Mediterranean Sea.

A SUN HOLIDAY COMBINED WITH A CITY BREAK

Barcelona is the second most populated city in Spain. The Catalonian capital is a cosmopolitan Mediterranean city with a rich historic-artistic heritage. If you are the kind of person that can lie in the sun for a day but after

that you get bored, then why not consider a trip to somewhere like Barcelona.

In Barcelona, you can choose between the pool, beach, shopping or incredible cultural sites such as the famous Gaudi Cathedral the Sagrada Familia.

There are five Diaverum dialysis units in Barcelona - Diaverum Nephros clinic is only 2 km from Parque Güell, Diaverum Center Virgen de Montserrat is 12 minutes away from Barcelona's train station.

The Institute of Haemodialysis of Barcelona Dialysis unit is just 350 metres away from Camp Nou Stadium. Diaverum Emilio Rotellar Dialysis Centre is just 10 minutes away from Maragall station and Diaverum Palau Dialysis Centre and 10 minutes away from Alfons X station.

PORTUGAL

Lisbon is the perfect city for a short break that includes a chance to look

around the city and hit the beach. Lisbon is one of the oldest cities in the world and is famously surrounded by seven hills, but you don't have to be super-fit to explore.

The city centre is level and easily walkable with beautiful, tiled streets.

Lisbon is about 15 miles from the sea which you can explore by trains, metro, trams and buses and are very cheap and efficient.

There are ten NephroCare clinics in and around Lisbon to choose from.

ITALY

If you're a fan of ancient history, **Rome** is the perfect destination for you. The city has ancient architecture and plenty of history. Whether you are in Rome for one day or one week be prepared to step into the world's biggest open-air museum. Rome offers countless historical sights.

The Italian capital is regarded as one of the world's most beautiful ancient cities, and contains vast amounts of priceless works of art, palaces, museums, parks, churches, gardens, basilicas, temples and theatres. You will find it difficult to decide what to see first: the Vatican, the Trevi Fountain, St Peter's Square, Spanish Steps, Colosseum...

If you are craving the beach, you can always take a train out of the city to visit the nearest beach and enjoy the best of both worlds! Whether you spend your time sightseeing, or lazing in cafés watching the world go by, it will be your turn to feature in your very own Roman Holiday.

Diaverum Roma is the dialysis unit in Rome, and it's situated about a 30 minute drive from the Vatican City.



Trevi Fountain

FOR YEAR-ROUND SUNSHINE CANARY ISLANDS

With a year-round subtropical climate, the **Canary Islands** are an ideal choice for both a winter sun or, a summer holiday.

The Canary Islands enjoys over 300 days of sunshine a year. Being six hundred miles south of the Iberian Peninsula and approximately 70 miles west of the African Coast, the Canary Islands should typify a desert region, but because of the mountains, trade winds and warm coastal waters, they enjoy a wonderful year-round temperate climate. There is such diversity amongst the islands that there really is an island to suit all tastes.

Tenerife is the largest of Spain's Canary Islands, off West Africa. It's dominated by Mt. Teide, a dormant volcano that is Spain's tallest peak. Tenerife may be best known for its Carnaval de Santa Cruz, a huge pre-Lent festival with parades, music, dancing and colourful costumes.

The island has many beaches (with sands from yellow to black) and resort areas, including Los Cristianos and Playa de las Americas. Most resorts are in the south. The famous Playa de las Americas, known for its busy nightlife, big all-inclusive hotels and bucket-and-spade atmosphere, is the largest. Neighbouring Los Cristianos is a touch calmer, attracting a more mature clientele. It's the departure point for ferries to the other Canary islands, so is a good base for day trips.

Dialysis is available under the EHIC in Playa de las Americas and Puerto de la Cruz.

There is a private dialysis centre in Puerto Santiago where the cost per session is €250 per session.

Lanzarote, one of the Canary Islands off the coast of West Africa administered by Spain, is known for its year-round warm weather, beaches and volcanic landscape.



In ALL FIVE dialysis locations in Mainland Spain and in Lisbon, Portugal and Rome, Italy the EHIC card IS ACCEPTED but patients have to organise their own transport to and from treatment.

EHIC is NOT accepted once you travel outside the EU.

Timanfaya National Park's rocky landscape was created by volcanic eruptions in the 1730s.

Very close to the entrance to the National Park is the Echadero de los Camellos, where you can climb up onto a camel and experience a ride around the volcanoes, feeling the breeze and hearing the crunching of fragments of lava, surrounded by a striking landscape.

Many of the island's beaches are perfect for the smaller family members, as they are protected from waves and currents, as are the natural pools that have formed in the shelter of lava flows that reach down as far as the sea after eruptions. The most popular areas to visit in Lanzarote is Puerto del Carmen, Playa Blanca and Costa Teguise.

Dialysis is available in Arrecife the capital of the island.

Gran Canaria is the third largest and second-most-populous island of the Canary Islands. It's known for its black lava and white sand beaches.

Its southern beaches include bustling Playa del Inglés and Puerto Rico as well as quieter Puerto de Mogán and San Agustín. In the north, capital city Las Palmas is a major stop for cruise ships and duty-free shopping. The island's interior is rural and mountainous.

Gran Canaria has four dialysis units which accept EHIC – Maspalomas, Teide, Las Palmas City and Guia in the North of the island.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Dubai is warm all year round, and although it's probably a little uncomfortable in the height of summer, it is perfect if you are envisioning a little winter

continued...

Sun, Sea and Travel continued....

sun on your bones.

October, Christmas and February are all popular times to experience Dubai at its best whether you want to shop, lay by the pool, visit the beach or trek through the desert.

Al Zahra Private Hospital Dubai (AZHD) is where the dialysis unit is located on Sheikh Zayed Road in Al

Barsha which runs through the heart of the emirate along with the Dubai World Trade Centre, Emirates Towers, Dubai Mall, Burj Khalifa and many more landmarks.

Dialysis costs around €230.00 per treatment session. No transport is provided by the dialysis unit to and from dialysis.



ALICANTE PROVINCE

(Alicante, Elche, Benidorm, orrevieja, Orihuela

Please **DO NOT** book a holiday to the Alicante region in Spain

Of all Spain's mainland provincial capitals, Alicante is the most influenced by tourism, unfortunately at the end of last year, the dialysis units in Alicante came under pressure with local patients needing dialysis. Because of this, **dialysis units in the Alicante area are currently full and are NOT accepting holiday dialysis requests.** Please do not book a holiday to Alicante as we cannot guarantee you will get dialysis whilst on holiday.

REMINDER: DIALYSIS ABROAD – PLAN EARLY

Please **DO NOT** book a holiday or flights before planning your dialysis treatment abroad. It is essential that you either contact a member of staff in your dialysis unit or you can submit an enquiry using our online form at <https://ika.ie/patient-holidays/> or contact

Deborah in the IKA on 01-6205306 email: deborah@ika.ie

Patients need to give a minimum of 8 weeks' notice for holiday treatments abroad. Overseas dialysis units are very busy and refuse to accept patients without enough notice.

IKA HOLIDAY HOMES

Spring has arrived and the good news is the holiday season is upon us once again. We will operate our **three** holiday locations in Tralee, Killarney and Tramore, this year on a 6-night basis (Saturday to check-out Friday). Priority will be given to first-time holiday applicants and to families with school-going children during summer school holidays.

The holiday application forms are available on our website at www.ika.ie under 'Our Services', then click on patient holiday <https://ika.ie/patient-holidays/>. Your local Branch Secretary, Haemodialysis units, PD Units and social worker also have forms.

Alternatively, you can contact: deborah@ika.ie

Save the Date



40th Annual Service of Remembrance & Thanksgiving

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27th, 2025

CHURCH OF THE HOLY CHILD
THATCH ROAD, WHITEHALL,
DUBLIN 9, D09 HX99

We are pleased to announce that the **40th Annual Service of Remembrance & Thanksgiving** will be held at the Church of The Holy Child, on Saturday, September 27th. The Church can accommodate up to 1,500 attendees. To ensure your place, **PLEASE BOOK EARLY.** We kindly ask that you register in advance to help us prepare for the numbers. This will also allow us to make arrangements for an overflow facility next door if needed.

You can reserve your place online using this link <https://ika.ie/service2025/> or email: info@ika.ie or phone: 01-6205306.

We will do our best to accommodate walk-ins on the day, if space allows, keeping in mind safety of all, especially our many immunocompromised attendees.

Additionally, filming will begin at 1.00pm sharp as the Service is televised at a later date, therefore we kindly ask that you be seated at least ten minutes beforehand to ensure a smooth start.

Some free car parking is available next to the **Church of the Holy Child.** The Church is just over 5 kilometres from the city centre on Dublin's northside (postcode D09 HX99). It is well serviced by public bus and there is a bus stop within a few minutes' walk. We look forward to seeing you on the day. Look out for more details on our social media and website.



IRISH KIDNEY ASSOCIATION CLG
(Company Limited By Guarantee)
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

BLOCK CAPITAL LETTERS PLEASE:

Mr. Mrs. Ms. FIRST NAME: _____

SURNAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL:

We record this information in line with the Constitution of the IKA. You must be 18 years of age to become a member of the Association.

Please indicate if any of the following apply to you:

PRE DIALYSIS, HAEMODIALYSIS, APD, CAPD or TRANSPLANTED

YES NO

NO

Do not wish to disclose

Do you wish to receive our quarterly 'SUPPORT' magazine by

Please tick 'No' if your household is already receiving it

Post? YES NO

NO

Can we correspond with you for notices of Annual General Meeting of the Association and Annual Director's Report by

Email? YES NO

Would you like to receive information on activities from your local IKA branch which entails us giving them the data from this form?

□ □

Would you like to receive information on the IKA Transplant & Dialysis Sports and Fitness which is based in Head Office?

YES NO

By signing this form you agree to become a member of the Association and you subscribe to the Constitution of the Association (copy available on request or on the IKA website – www.ika.ie)

I subscribe to (sign up and accept) the Constitution of the Irish Kidney Association CLG (Company Limited by Guarantee).

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

**Please return the completed signed form to the
Irish Kidney Association CLG, (Freepost), Donor House, Block 43A, Park West, D12 P5V6.
*There is NO SUBSCRIPTION charge.***



As we embrace the New Year, we are filled with gratitude and excitement to announce that Tramore apartments will be opening earlier than usual this year, starting the weekend of April 12th, 2025, coinciding with the Easter school holidays.

Over the past few months, we've been working diligently to ensure they are ready to welcome patients and their families, and we can't wait to see them in action for the 2025 season!

We acknowledge the continuing work of Cathy Keoghan, Emma, Dickie and Andy during the season ensuring a pleasant stay for our guests. Here's hoping the sun will shine in the Southeast!

Our Branch meetings have resumed, and it's always a pleasure to welcome back our dedicated volunteer members. We are deeply grateful for the time and energy they generously give throughout the year, whether attending meetings or assisting with collections and other important activities. We are excited for another successful year, working together on behalf of the patients in the Waterford Branch.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the West Waterford Athletic Club for their incredibly generous donation of €5,000 this February.

Branch member Eileen Long had a very successful Christmas Jumper night in December in the Forge Pub, Portlaw raising €773 for the Branch.

A sincere thank you to Christine Cliffe from Touraneena, who along with her mam Teresa and dad Mossie, generously handed over a cheque for €500 to Frances Moynihan, Hon. Branch Treasurer, at Dunne's Pub on March 3rd, 2025.

The funds were raised thanks to

WATERFORD

By FRANCES MOYNIHAN



Tom Dunne, Christine Cliffe, Nuala Dunne, Mossie Cliffe, Frances Moynihan, Teresa Cliffe.

the efforts of Brendan Tobin of Touraneena, who organised a Poker Classic at the pub.

Christine's own journey is truly inspiring – on June 2nd, 1998, at the age of 11, she received a life-changing kidney transplant and was one of the youngest recipients at the time.

We extend our congratulations to Christine on her recent engagement and wish her all the best as she plans her wedding in Lanzarote next year. Thanks to Nuala Dunne for her hospitality.

We also appreciate the efforts of the volunteers who manned the stands in ALDI locations in Tramore, Dungarvan, and Ashe Road in

Waterford on March 8th.

Your support means so much to us.

World Kidney Day in Waterford was marked with a stand in the reception area of UHW, and we are grateful to everyone involved in making this event a success.

Finally, we are delighted to share the news that the Support Centre at Beaumont will soon be undergoing much-needed renovations, and we are hopeful it will be ready to once again serve patients and their families at the earliest opportunity.

We are truly thankful for the continued support and dedication of all those who make our work possible.

OFFALY

By MARJORIE STANLEY

Greetings from the Offaly Branch.

CHRISTMAS GET TOGETHER

We had a very enjoyable Get Together in the Tullamore Court Hotel on Sunday, December 15th. We were delighted that some patients on dialysis and their families were able to join us on the day. We gave a presentation on the services provided by the IKA and we had light refreshments afterwards.

BRANCH MEETING

A meeting was held in Mucklagh Community Centre on Thursday, February 20th. We were delighted to welcome some new members.

WORLD KIDNEY DAY - ALDI

We had collectors at both ALDI stores in Tullamore and in ALDI Edenderry on Saturday, March 8th. Thank you to all who helped out on the day. It was good to meet people and promote kidney health.

WEXFORD

By MARIA DONLON



Liam Buttle holding a collection bucket with and all who took part in the annual Christmas swim on Ballinesker beach.

It's been a busy few months in the Wexford Branch.

Firstly, well done to everyone who turned out and braved the cold waters with Liam Buttle for the annual Christmas swim on Ballinesker beach. A gorgeous spot even in December!

The Wexford Branch of the IKA were delighted to be presented with a cheque for the sum of €5,000 from the Clohamon Vintage & Heritage Club. These were the proceeds from the 'Light up Christmas Tractor Road Run' which was held on Saturday December 14th and was a day enjoyed by all.

Our thanks to Clohamon Vintage & Heritage Club for this generous donation to support IKA patient services.

We were also thrilled to have a great turnout for the annual Wexford Credit Union 5k night run which was held on February 6th.

A special thank you to all the volunteers who helped with the collections in ALDI New Ross,



Cheque presentation to Liam Buttle and Pauline Atkinson, from Clohamon Vintage club for €5,000, proceeds from the 'Light up Christmas Tractor Run'.

Enniscorthy, Wexford and Gorey on Saturday, March 8th.

This was a very important day to raise funds to support our services and to raise awareness about kidney disease. We had a great response from volunteers and a lot of support

from ALDI and from the public.

Finally, we would like to wish the very best of luck and good health to Pauline Atkinson who received a transplant recently. We are delighted for you and your loved ones.



Six week check-up for Patrick, Pauline Atkinson, Wexford Branch IKA, with Sandra Flanagan, senior renal nurse in Beaumont Hospital.



Walter Kent and Liam Buttle at the official launch of the annual Wexford Credit Union 5k run in aid of the IKA.



BRANCH MEETINGS

Dublin South Branch held our first meeting of the year on Monday, February 10th at Rua Red Arts Centre. This was another face-to-face gathering which was well attended.

It was particularly nice to welcome new members to the meeting and hearing about their kidney journey to date. It's always important to hear the various stories of how we each have gotten to this stage in the journey towards end stage kidney failure, dialysis or transplant.

Over tea/coffee we also focused on:

- IKA patient services
- Transplant Sport Ireland – always looking for new members
- Volunteering for the IKA

Our second Branch meeting, also at Rua Red Arts Centre, was on Monday, March 3rd and was very well attended. This was largely due to the input of IKA's very own Lisa Fitzgerald telling us the story of her journey to kidney transplant and beyond, her subsequent volunteering with the IKA and current role as joint Fundraising Manager.

Lisa was inspirational in her talk on the importance of members supporting each other at Branch meetings and also spoke on the rewards and benefits that many volunteers feel from helping to promote organ donor awareness and IKA fundraising efforts. She stayed on to answer any questions and concerns from patients.

Thanks very much Lisa. It was great to have you there on the night.

As well as hearing updates from our patients we moved on to a discussion of the upcoming ALDI fundraising logistics as well as finalising time slots for covering the stores.

DUBLIN SOUTH

By GERRY McKENNA



Some of the Branch attended at Rua Red Arts Centre were: (back, l-r): Ann Harnett O'Connor, John O'Connor, Gerry McKenna, Robbie Coghlan, Paddy Sneyd, Benita Harbourne. (Front, l-r): Sheila Coghlan, Ann Coady, Vincent Harbourne, Roisin Healy O'Higgins, Niall O'Higgins.

ALDI MARCH 8TH

We had a great response to our call for fundraising volunteers, 35 in all, covering four ALDI stores at Terenure, Nutgrove, Newlands Cross and Tallaght Cross. Thanks to everyone who turned out on the day and to the many who were with us in spirit sending words of encouragement – but due to illness / dialysis or prior commitments could not make it along. Thanks for your support in every form.

ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS WEEK – CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Chronic Kidney Disease affects 1 in 10 people, so volunteering if you can, to raise awareness will benefit many kidney patients. Next up is Organ Donor Awareness Week 2025, starting on May 10th.

Contact Gerry on 086-0268223 if you can spare an hour or two to

distribute organ donor cards in a shopping centre or other public venue. Bring along a family member to help out if you can.

RATHFARNHAM GOLF CLUB BRIDGE FUNDRAISER

I attended, as a representative of the IKA local Branch to thank those who answered the call of Lady Captain Jennifer O'Regan to support the IKA with a morning of Bridge, followed by lunch in the Club's function room. I don't think there was a spare seat to be had in the large room. Jennifer got a great response from members and non-members of the Golf Club.

A lot of money was raised for a cause close to the Lady Captain, and to all of us kidney patients.

Well done and thank you to Jennifer and all those who supported this great fundraising event.



At Rathfarnham Golf Club were: Gillian O'Donnell, Jennifer O'Regan (Lady Captain) and Mary Kelly (Lady Vice Captain).

DUBLIN SOUTH

PERSONAL DONATION

On World Kidney Day a very generous donation of €5,000 was made to our Branch by a long-serving member. This was in recognition of the work on the ground by Branch volunteers for the recent fundraising efforts. We are very grateful for this donation for patient services, and wish to convey our gratitude to our member who has always been a great supporter to the IKA. Thank you very much.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The next meeting of Dublin South IKA Branch as well as supporting patients will also serve as our Branch Annual General Meeting for 2025. This will be held at Rua Red Arts Centre, Tallaght on Monday, April 14th at 7.30pm.

We encourage anyone considering volunteering as part of the Branch Officer team, to attend and put their name forward on the night or beforehand as many hands make light work! All Branch members are invited to attend.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Hopefully we can get together for an occasional coffee morning, walking activities or other social events over the coming months in different locations around the South Dublin area. Please feel free to suggest a location in your own area for a meet-up and we will endeavour to make it happen.

All event details and articles of interest to kidney patients will be publicised on our Dublin South IKA Facebook page and also on the WhatsApp group. Let us know if you wish to join our WhatsApp group.

Follow us on Facebook:
<https://m.facebook.com/SouthDublinIKA/>

COMMUNICATIONS

If you are not getting regular communications from the Branch and would like to, please contact Gerry on 086-0268223 by text/call or by email to: ika.dublinsouthbranch@gmail.com

You are welcome to join our WhatsApp group for greater interactions with fellow patients and quicker notification of IKA events, Branch meetings, IKA webinars etc.

If there is something you think we should add to Dublin South Branch Notes in the next edition of *SUPPORT* magazine please get in touch.

If you are aware of any fundraising events coming up, please let us know and Dublin South Branch and the IKA will help promote the event on social media.

TIPPERARY

By MARY ADAMSON



Alison with supporters and friends.

The Tipperary Branch members and volunteers were out in force for World Kidney Day in ALDI stores in Clonmel, Cahir, Thurles, Nenagh and Roscrea on Saturday, March 8th and SuperValu Clonmel also.

Many thanks to all who gave freely of their time and to all who donated so generously.

Our own Alison Fogarty McCarthy has been busy walking the 180km which is the distance from her home in Tipperary to Beaumont Hospital where she received her kidney transplant last year. She has been walking 25km a day around Tipperary followed by her many supporters to raise funds and awareness of kidney disease and organ donation.

Alison's marathon walk finished on Thursday, March 13th at the iconic and historic Rock of Cashel which was all lit up in purple, the IKA colours, to honour the occasion.

Well done, Alison! The Tipperary Branch are very proud of your achievement and wish you continued good health.

Our next meeting will be our AGM on Wednesday, April 9th at 7.30pm in the Anner Hotel, Thurles. We hope to see as many as possible there and look forward to the cuppa and chat afterwards.

KERRY

By THERESA LOONEY

Huge thanks to the O'Connor family who organised a fundraising walk from Teer Cross to Brandon Point on December 27th. They also hosted a card game in their home and in total raised over €5,140. Thanks so much to everyone who helped out and donated so generously.

Also huge thanks to the Murhill family, from Muckross, who again for the second year organised a fundraising walk in memory of their dad Hugh. This was followed by a great social evening in Tigh Mary Donals pub with raffle, music and finger food. Thanks to everyone who donated prizes and contributed to the walk. A special thank you to Pat Sheehan and staff at Tigh Mary Donals who looked after everyone so well on the evening.

Kerry Branch volunteers were very busy at ALDI stores in Dingle and in Daly's Supermarket in Killarney for World Kidney Day collecting funds for the IKA and sharing information about kidney health and organ donation. Our thanks to the volunteers who gave up their time on Saturday, March 8th and to all who donated to and supported this activity.

We look forward to welcoming patients and their families to our holiday homes in Tralee and Killarney for the year ahead. Hopefully the sun will shine and everyone will enjoy the Kerry hospitality!

Our sympathies to members and their families who have lost loved ones in recent months. May they rest in peace.



ika winner in treasure hunt

Local man Brian Devaney took first place in the Ransboro St. Stephen's Day Car Treasure Hunt which was held in aid of the Sligo Branch Irish Kidney Association (IKA).

The well-known local panto dame proved a popular winner of the treasure hunt organised by Jim Doyle.

Our IKA Branch and the patients we serve emerged the big winners with the event raising €1,020.

Thanks to Jim Doyle, all treasure hunters for their generous contributions and to sponsors Coolera Dramatic Society.



Ann Killian, on behalf of sponsors Coolera Dramatic Society presents the proceeds to Brian McHugh, Sligo Branch IKA.



Bobby Jones, Chairman of Coolera Dramatic Society with hunt winner Brian Devaney (centre) and organiser Jim Doyle.

SLIGO

By BRIAN McHUGH



Brian McHugh, IKA Sligo; Aine O'Grady, Arrotek; Marie Fowley, IKA Sligo; Ger O'Carroll and Sarah Comiskey, Arrotek.

ARROTEK DONATION

Santa came early for our Branch with the presentation of a generous donation from Arrotek Medical Ltd. in Sligo on Friday, December 20th. The company, based in Finisklin Business Park, have been a valued supporter of the IKA over a number of years.

TOP SPEAKERS AT INFO EVENING

Our Branch held a well-attended information evening on March 5th in the Glasshouse Hotel.

It was organised for the benefit of all affected by kidney disease, their families, those who care for them and all interested in the treatment of renal ailments.

Guest speakers were, Dr. James Lineen, Consultant Nephrologist Sligo University Hospital, Aoife Smith, Coordinator of Counselling Services with Irish Kidney Association and Liz Rafferty, Renal Dietician, Sligo University Hospital. The speakers took questions from the floor afterwards.

Sarah Buchanan, Donor House also attended and along with Branch members mingled with attendees over a cuppa afterwards.

ALDI COLLECTIONS

In association with World Kidney Day, members of our Branch were fundraising in the ALDI Store in



Nephrologist Dr. James Lineen.



Aoife Smith, Coordinator of IKA Counselling Services.

Cranmore, Sligo on March 8th.

Appropriately being International Women's Day, ladies from our Branch were to the fore at the fundraising event.

Thanks to all who donated, also to the management and staff of ALDI who warmly welcomed us.

ON PARADE WITH IKA

Our Branch was the charity partner for this year's highly successful Sligo Saint Patrick's Day parade.

Thanks to Sligo BID (Business Improvement Districts) for selecting us as their chosen charity. Also thanks to all who donated and to the volunteers who came out to help our Branch by 'shaking buckets' on the day.

See the next issue of *SUPPORT* for pictures.

SLIGO HALF MARATHON RUNS FOR IKA

Our Branch is delighted to have been chosen as the charity partner for this year's very popular Sligo Half Marathon and Carney 10K.

The Easter Monday event starts at Oxfield near Carney with the route taking in some of the stunning scenery of North Sligo.

Last year's run attracted more than 500 competitors and this is expected to be surpassed this year



At the launch of the Run partnership with Sligo IKA were Sean Fowley, Sligo IKA Chairman; Geraldine McHugh, Sligo IKA Secretary with Run Committee members Brian Gallagher, Damien Kerrigan and Sean McCaffrey.

with it having gained Sligo Half Marathon status.

Hall in Charles St. Sligo. This follows the sale of our previous venue.

Thanks to the Presbyterian Hall management for accommodating us. Meeting dates will be advertised on our Facebook and Twitter pages.

CHRISTMAS BUFFET

A good time was had by all who attended the Christmas buffet for renal patients and carers hosted by our Branch in Coolera House on Sunday December 8th.

Some pictures here give a flavour of the event.





KILMESSAN HURLING CLUB TRACTOR RUN

On November 30th, 2024, in memory of Anne Murphy, a beloved member of the community, Kilmessan Hurling Club in Co. Meath ran a Tractor and Truck Run and proudly raised €1,000 for the IKA.

The cheque presentation took place on Friday, February 10th, in Fergie's Bar, Kilmessan.

Sarah Buchanan, representing the IKA, was presented with the donation by club members Simon Murphy, Michael Lally, Stuart Lynch, Thomas Duignan, Ian Fitzsimons, Jim Harlan, and Brian Flaherty.

WORLD KIDNEY DAY COLLECTION

On Saturday, March 8th, a group of dedicated volunteers set up an information and fundraising stand at ALDI Dundalk to mark World Kidney Day 2025.

Throughout the day, they engaged



Simon Murphy, Michael Lally, Stuart Lynch, Sarah Buchanan, Thomas Duignan, Ian Fitzsimons, Jim Harlan and Brian Flaherty.

in meaningful conversations, raised awareness, shared stories, and, of course, shook plenty of buckets – all while enjoying great craic!

A heartfelt thank you to our amazing volunteers for generously giving their time: Sonia and Holly Grimley, Johnny Brennan, Andrew and Evie Gallagher, Paula Butterly, Shauna Doyle, Yvonne Lennon, Margaret Watters, Aoife and Sophia Adams, and Sheila Brosnan.

Your support and enthusiasm made the day a great success.

LOUTH / MEATH BRANCH - WE NEED YOU!

The Louth/Meath Branch is working hard to re-activate, and we recently sent out a survey to members to gauge their interest in re-engagement. Now, we need your support to revitalise the Branch.

If you're interested in getting involved and helping to reinvigorate the Branch for our members, we'd love to hear from you.

Please feel free to email volunteer@ika.ie or contact Sarah Buchanan at 083-3232145.

Together, we can make a difference!

ROSCOMMON

By MAURA QUIGLEY



Every year, the Ballymurray Bridge Club nominates a chosen charity of the year. This year the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) is the chosen beneficiary. At a recent charity night, kind hearted club members raised €1,000 to support the IKA.

The Roscommon Branch of the IKA would like to thank them most sincerely for their generous donation.

This kind donation was most appreciated.

At the presentation from the Ballymurray Bridge Club to Roscommon Branch Officers were: Larry Shine, Bridge Coordinator, Ballymurray Bridge Club; Kevin Coyle, President, Ballymurray Bridge Club; Maury Quigley, Secretary, Roscommon IKA; John Cormican, Treasurer, Roscommon IKA; Marian Beirne, Treasurer, Ballymurray Bridge Club; Monica Finn, Roscommon IKA and Vincent Finan, Chairperson, Roscommon IKA.



Hello everyone from the Donegal Branch.

Thank you for all your support and contributions in 2024. We had a very busy year overall and it was always lovely to see everyone at our meetings.

Since our last update, in November, two wonderful young schoolboys Adam Hutchinson and Aaron McClaffery decided to put their love of reading to good use by completing a readathon in aid of the IKA. This came about after Adams's Dad received a kidney from his Granny back in 2018, and the IKA proved to be invaluable to him and his family. Deciding to do some fundraising, he and his cousin Aaron, between them, read a total of 27 books – that's a huge 8,043 pages and raised a massive €611! Thank you so much to everyone who supported them.

In December we surprised the dialysis patients at Letterkenny University Hospital with gift baskets, to help make their experience a bit more comfortable, and to provide some support to them. These gift baskets were supported by a donation in memory of Theresa Kavanagh's Dad Michael Kavanagh as well as other monies raised in the run up to the festive season. All gift baskets were very well received, everyone was delighted, and Christmas cheer was spread.

Other donations came from

DONEGAL

By BRIDGEEN McCORKELL

Adam Hutchison, Aaron McClaffery and Siobhan Bates.



Sharon and Gerry Durning who ran a bingo night, tractor run and lit-up their home for Christmas calling it 'Light up Ballyare'. It was a fantastic display! Two charities benefited from their hard work – the IKA and Little Blue Heroes, (a Gardai foundation that helps seriously ill children).

Also, busy raising funds was Breda Butler. Breda's friend, Eileen McFadden's husband Danny and daughter Yvonne were transplant recipients. Breda who works in the PCC Falcarragh school finds coins around the school and gathers them up and donates her findings to charity. Breda chose the IKA to commemorate Danny McFadden who sadly, passed away.

To finish a busy year of fundraising, raising awareness and holding our own 'In Memory Mass', we, as a Branch, had a well-deserved night out. We reflected on everything that we accomplished in 2024 and discussed ideas for 2025. It will be another busy year!

To start the year off we were out fundraising in some of our local ALDI stores in Buncrana and Ballybofey. This was a very busy and successful day fundraising and raising awareness of the vital supports the



Spreading Christmas cheer at Letterkenny University Hospital.

IKA provide. Everyone was so friendly and talked about shared experiences or family members affected by kidney issues. The kidney community is truly a very supportive one. A heartfelt thank you to the ALDI stores for allowing us to fundraise at their premises and a massive thank you to everyone who stopped for a chat and donated to support IKA patient services.

An upcoming event we have planned during Organ Donor Awareness Week is to attend Atlantic Technological University, Letterkenny where we will set up an information stand to highlight the importance of organ donation. Date and time to be confirmed.

Finally, thank you to everyone for all your support in 2024 and we look forward to everything that 2025 will bring with your help.

For any information or information on Branch meetings please contact our Secretary Patricia Callaghan on 086-6073339.

SUPPORT DEADLINE

The deadline for submission of Branch notes and high resolution photos for the next edition of

SUPPORT is Friday, July 11th, 2025.

Email: supportmag@ika.ie



Just three months into 2025 and the Galway Branch is off to a very busy start, with lots to look forward to in the coming months.



Lauren Melia at her New Year's Day Dip in Salthill.

LAUREN'S NEW YEAR'S SWIM FUNDRAISER

What a better way to start off 2025 than a fresh dip in the sea for a great cause! Galway Branch member Lauren Melia organised a 'New Year's Day Dip' in aid of the IKA and to promote organ donation and raised a staggering €9,422!

Following four years on haemodialysis, Lauren received her second kidney transplant in January 2023. Nearly two years on, a huge crowd gathered at the steps at Blackrock Diving Tower to support Lauren's fundraising dip.

"Over the years I have used the many supports provided by the IKA to kidney patients, from their counselling services to the use of their holiday homes," said Lauren. "My family and I also benefited from the accommodation provided by the IKA during my stay in Beaumont hospital post-transplant which had a huge impact on our lives."

Lauren was blown away by the support of her local community in Rosscahill and further afield and was delighted that she could give back to the IKA allowing them to continue supporting kidney patients.

GALWAY

By MICHELLE GERAGHTY

Lauren Melia with supporters at her New Year's Day Dip Fundraiser in Salthill.



Keith and Claire Spain of Spain's Coaches with Eoin Madden, Galway IKA (centre).

Everyone at the Galway Branch would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations and thanks to Lauren for her amazing efforts.

SPECIAL THANKS TO SPAIN'S COACHES

The Galway Branch would like to extend our condolences to Keith and Claire Spain and family, following the death of Keith's father Joe Spain in October, 2024. Joe passed away suddenly following a fall and his family made the brave and generous decision to donate Joe's organs, including his kidneys, a gift that saved numerous lives.

Keith and Claire, directors of Spain's Coach and Minibus Hire in Loughrea in Co. Galway made a generous donation of €2,000 to the IKA Galway Branch in honour of Joe.

All at the Galway Branch are very grateful to the Spain family for their support and will keep Joe in our thoughts.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We held our AGM at the Menlo Park Hotel on February 13th, 2025 and were delighted to welcome a large group of members, many joining us for the first time in person.

Along with our usual AGM business, we were delighted to welcome Samantha Lee as our new Treasurer and Michael Walsh as our new Vice Chairperson.

Eoin Madden, Peadar Ó hÍci and Michelle Geraghty were re-elected as our Chair, Secretary and PRO respectively.



Galway Branch AGM 2025

We'd like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to our outgoing officers Christine Curley and Bernie Coyne for their commitment to the IKA. Christine served 21 years as Treasurer with Bernie serving as Vice Chair for 8 years, demonstrating their tireless dedication to our Branch and the many kidney patients and carers across the county.

We're delighted that both Christine and Bernie will remain active members in the Branch.

BRANCH MEETINGS



Galway Branch members at our February meeting held at Scotty's.

Our monthly meetings are going from strength to strength with new members at every meeting. Scotty's Famous Burgers and Wings kindly offered their restaurant as a venue to host our February meeting on the 10th, complete with refreshments.

Scotty Ishmael, his wife Jennifer and their son Drew have been longtime friends of the Branch. In 2022, while on dialysis, Drew raised over €11,000 for the IKA from a variety of activities such as walks, runs, cake sales, etc. with the support of family and friends.

In early 2023, Jennifer selflessly donated a kidney to Drew, and both are now thankfully doing very well.

While we love an opportunity to

meet in person at our monthly meetings, we made the decision to hold our March meeting over Zoom to facilitate those who are not able to attend in person. We took the opportunity to discuss future fundraisers and debrief on our successful World Kidney Day fundraiser.

COOKERY DEMONSTRATION

Drew Ishmael's commitment to helping kidney patients doesn't end with fundraising. On February 27th, Drew organised a free cookery demonstration at the Claregalway Hotel with the assistance of Gemma Prendergast and Sinead Clarke (nursing) and Orla Slevin (dietitian) from Merlin Park Hospital.

Drew utilised his extensive culinary skills to create delicious and nutritious meal ideas for those living with chronic kidney disease.

A well-known chef and baker in Galway, Drew created some mouth-watering dishes proving the renal diet doesn't have to be boring and bland. The menu included spiced apple and oat pancakes, herbed couscous with harissa carrots and

cranberries and turkey katsu with cabbage and rice noodles.

Over 100 people attended the event, including Galway Bay FM's Ronan Lardner who was the MC for the night who ensured a fun-filled, informative night was had by all.

WORLD KIDNEY DAY 2025

Like many Branches across the country, our members were out in force at ALDI branches across the city and county on March 8th collecting funds for the IKA. Over 20 volunteers at five ALDI stores including Knocknacarra, Westside, Athenry, Oranmore and Mountbellew raised and a lot of money was raised on the day.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Galway for their kindness and generosity. It was clear from our conversations that so many people are affected, either directly or indirectly, by kidney disease, highlighting the importance of the work of the IKA.

IVETA NATIONAL RALLY FUNDRAISER

The North Galway Vintage & Heritage Club will host the 2025 IVETA National Rally, alongside the Vintage Show and Autojumble at the Glenamaddy Equestrian Centre on Sunday, May 25th.

We're delighted that thanks to the efforts of kidney patient Paul Greaney, the proceeds of the sale of the event booklet for that event will go to the Galway Branch of the IKA.

Members of our team will be in attendance on the day selling booklets and will be happy to speak to anyone about the work of the IKA.

If you're in the vicinity, we'd love to see you on the day so do pop along and say hello!



Cookery Demo (l-r): Sinead Clarke, Michelle Moran, Lorna Durack, Georgia Lee, Andrew Ishmael, Gemma Prendergast, Orla Slevin, Joey Twomey, Collette Broderick and Maria Geraghty.

AROUND THE BRANCHES

The Branch put in a great effort for the fundraising around WKD and had stands in Centra Mohill and SuperValu Ballinamore on Friday, March 7th and ALDI, Carrick-on-Shannon on Saturday, March 8th.

People were very generous and the new tap machine was a great addition!



Joe McGivern in SuperValu Ballinamore



Michael McGovern, Manager SuperValu Ballinamore and Cathriona Charles, Leitrim IKA Branch.

IMPORTANT NOTICE - LEITRIM BRANCH AGM

The Leitrim Branch will hold their AGM on Tuesday, April 15th at 7.30pm in the Canon Donohue Hall, Mohill, N41Y215.

The agenda will include reports from the Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary, election of Officers and Board member, and AOB.

Please confirm your attendance or send apologies to the Secretary.

CONDOLENCES

The Branch would like to express their condolences to our past Chairperson Kathleen McTeigue and family on the passing of John in late December.

John was a kidney transplant recipient and the whole family were great supporters of the IKA, running several events, including walks, to raise funds and raise awareness.

May his gentle soul rest in peace.

CARLOW

By ORLA CANNING

Carlow are delighted to announce the appointment of new IKA Branch officers after officially gathering in October with members from the Carlow area.

It was a meaningful evening as we discussed the invaluable services the Irish Kidney Association offers its members and we revisited the Branch history with former Chairperson Pat May.

We would like to give an extra

special thank you to Pat May for all her hard work and dedication to the Carlow Branch over many, many years and her incredible support in helping us get back up and running.

The new officers are:

Chairperson: Alan Cullen

Secretary: Orla Canning

Treasurer: Bryan Duignan

Our members, officers and volunteers were out in force on

World Kidney Day at ALDI in Hanover, Carlow town, to raise money for the Irish Kidney Association and raise awareness on the day.

We are so thankful for all the kind support, messages and donations we received.

We are looking forward to meeting all our local members and encourage anyone to reach out to us if they have any questions.

CAVAN/MONAGHAN

By PAUL DONOHOE



The newly elected officers of Cavan/Monaghan Branch IKA: Paul Donohoe Chairman, Rose Dalton Secretary, Karl Cronin Treasurer, Aodhagan Cullen, Board Member.



At SuperValu Ballyconnell on World Kidney Day were: Ellie McConnell, Siobhan Johnston and Veronica Johnston.

We recently held our Annual General Meeting and we were delighted to see new members in attendance.

The Officers elected were:

Chairman: Paul Donohoe

Secretary: Rose Dalton

Treasurer: Karl Cronin

Board Member: Aodhagan Cullen

We have planned an Information Day for dialysis patients and low clearance patients where specialists nurses will explain the different

forms of dialysis available.

World Kidney Day was well received locally. Along with dialysis nurses and staff we had an information and awareness promotion and a kidney health quiz in Cavan General Hospital.

We had good local press coverage and a successful fundraising campaign and we would like to thank all the volunteers who helped out.

LONGFORD

Longford branch volunteers were busy at the ALDI store on Kilashee Road in Longford town for World Kidney Day collecting funds for the IKA and sharing information about kidney health and organ donation.

Our thanks to the volunteers who gave up their time on

Saturday, March 8th and to all who donated to and supported this activity.

Our sympathies to members and their families who have lost loved ones in recent months.

May they rest in peace.

LAOIS

By JOHN BYRNE

Hi to all from Laois.

We had a wonderful day out collecting for World Kidney Day on Saturday, March 8th in ALDI Stores in Portlaoise and Portarlington.

We offer a huge 'thank you' to our volunteers who came out to collect on behalf of the IKA Laois Branch and to the wonderful supporters who donated to us at both stores.

We don't have a final figure collected as yet but going on the weight of the buckets we have done very well. Thank you to everyone involved.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Our next Branch meeting will be held in B. Braun, Portlaoise on Thursday, April 10th at 7pm.

This is a very important meeting as it our Annual General Meeting and elections will be held for each Branch role: Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. We would like to encourage as many as possible to attend to nominate and elect Branch members to go forward.

We also will be selecting a nominee to go forward to represent the Laois Branch for election to the Board of Directors. The Board Annual General Meeting will take place in Dublin on June 14th, 2025.

At our Branch meeting on April 10th, we will be discussing and planning events to take place in our Branch for Organ Donor Awareness Week (ODAW) which will take place May 10th to 17th, 2025.

We will be seeking volunteers and suggestions about how to promote awareness of the importance of organ donation across all disciplines.

If you are an organ donor, recipient, or are waiting for an organ donation we would truly love to hear you share your story during Organ Donor Awareness Week.



Hello one and all. It seems a long time since the last edition of SUPPORT magazine and as usual the Cork Branch have been very active in the last few months.

ANNUAL MASS OF REMEMBRANCE - CORK

Thankfully we were all back live and in-person for our annual Mass in November. It was great to see such a large turnout given that some of you are still reluctant, and rightly so, to mix in large groups and crowds. It was a beautiful ceremony as usual, celebrated by the Cork University Hospital Chaplain, Fr. Colin Doocey assisted by Julianna Crowley.

STUDENT TALKS

Sheena McDonagh, Pat O'Sullivan and Bernard Cronin will speak to the Pharmacy students in UCC in April. This is an important talk to these students as they get a patient understanding of how important the correct medication is to End Stage Kidney Patients. Having a good pharmacist is vital to patients.

MUNSTER KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE

Most of you, if not all, will have seen our wonderful Munster Kidney Support Centre at this stage and if you have not, we would encourage you to go and visit. The staff at the centre, Jennifer, Sally, Colette and Aoife are always there to welcome you.

The Centre is open for all renal patients and their families if required. The Centre is available for families with patients in 4C dialysis, patients on dialysis and all other renal issues, should you require somewhere to go and put your feet up while you wait for your loved ones to finish treatment.

CORK

By PAT O'SULLIVAN

VOLUNTEERS

From time to time the officers in the Branch will be looking for volunteers in helping to promote kidney disease awareness. If you have a family member in 4C you could help support various events.

This usually consists of manning a desk for an hour or two, handing out donor cards and talking about your personal experiences. Volunteers can be from families and patients alike. If you would like to volunteer for future events, please contact the Secretary at secretarycork.ika@gmail.com or 086-2755754. This mobile is also the number for our WhatsApp group. If you would like to be kept up to date with all the goings on in the Branch text this number to be included.

GOLF CLASSIC

Our annual Golf Classic will take place, as usual, in Mitchelstown Golf Club on May 30th. The tee times are now available. Bookings can be made through the usual channels, text or message Pat on 087-7697769. We hope to see as many of you as we can on the day.

Volunteers are always welcome to help on the day. Days like this demand a lot of manpower. It can be from just manning the desk and taking the names of the competitors or just selling some raffle tickets.

We are also always looking for prizes for the day so if you would like to donate a prize for the raffle or sponsor a prize for the golf itself

these are always welcome.

The format is the same as ever: Teams of three, €160 per team, teams can be of any gender or both. Prizes on the day for longest drive, Men's and Ladies and Nearest the Pin, Men's and Ladies.

WORLD TRANSPLANT GAMES, DRESDEN, AUGUST 17TH-22ND

Several Cork members will be participating in this year's Games in Dresden in Germany. Transplant Sport Ireland are always looking for new members. Sports are available for all ages and abilities, from petanque, darts, tennis, swimming, golf, football, archery, cycling, table tennis, ten-pin bowling, and volleyball.

You can contact Transplant Sport Ireland if you are interested in joining the team.

WORLD KIDNEY DAY

We held some collections this year in ALDI in Wilton and ALDI in Mallow. While we were delighted to have these two stores supported on the day we have lots more stores in the county and we are hoping for a bigger uptake next year in the number of stores that we can man.

We thank all our volunteers. Promoting kidney disease and collecting much needed funds to help patients is our collective goal.

Enjoy your summer. Updates on Organ Donor Awareness Week will be posted when details are available.

Remember you can keep up to date with all our news and information through our social media channels and our WhatsApp group.

Thank you from the office of the Cork Branch.

BRANCH OFFICERS

Chairperson:

Wesley O'Shea

Secretary:

Vacancy

Treasurer:

Bernard Cronin

Board Member:

Pat O'Sullivan





Greetings to all.

Dublin North Branch members met recently for lunch and a meeting to prepare for World Kidney Day. We are feeling a lot happier this Spring at the prospect of meeting again in our National Kidney Support Centre.

It's not going to happen tomorrow, but things are moving and renovations will lead to an updated, better than ever facility. It will be an emotional experience for patients and families from around the country, who will, once again, have access to this essential support. Hope has returned.

WORLD KIDNEY DAY

Our annual reminder of the importance of organ donation and transplantation also provides an opportunity to make people more aware of the work we do and hopefully make a contribution.

Although from this Branches perspective World Kidney Day has been a success, nonetheless card readers for all collectors are becoming a necessity.

Future contributions will be mainly by cards rather than coins.

SEAMUS BUTLER, RIP

One of our valued members Seamus Butler passed away on February 3rd. Our deepest condolences to his wife Gillian and children, Louise, Karen, Bryan and Stephen, and his adored grandchildren.

At Seamus's funeral service, a retiring collection was taken in aid of the IKA, and a very generous sum was raised and matched by a donation from a supportive company. Our thanks to eBay for equalling the retiring collection.

Thank you to all involved for your generous support.

May Seamus rest in peace.

DUBLIN NORTH

By COLIN MACKENZIE

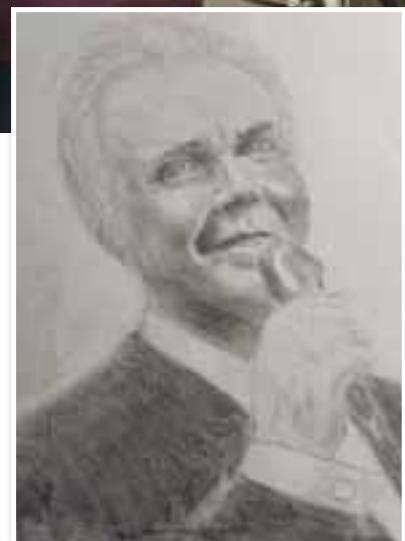


Colin Mackenzie (right) presented Red Hurley with his portrait.

RED HURLEY PORTRAIT

In recognition of his generous support of the IKA over many years, Colin Mackenzie recently presented Red with his portrait which was featured in Colin's recent Exhibition of drawings held in Malahide in December.

Our thanks to member Anne Burke for hosting this event and supporters who attended.



Acknowledgements of Deceased Loved Ones

At a difficult and sensitive time, the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) wants to acknowledge the recent passing of your deceased loved one in a respectful and personal way. In recent times we have been receiving an increase in the number of requests for inclusion of expressions of sympathy and life stories in *SUPPORT* magazine, from families of loved ones who have passed away. Therefore, in order to ensure consistency of approach, guidance has been developed regarding inclusion of obituaries based on the deceased's person involvement and role with the IKA.

The guidance allows for expressions of sympathy in other ways outside inclusions in *SUPPORT* magazine.

Please contact your Branch officer if you have any queries in relation to this guidance which outlines what can be included.



ika DIRECTORY

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NATIONAL KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE, Beaumont Hospital, Dublin D09 Y5R3 - UNDER RENOVATION

Telephone: 01-6908887 | Email: info@ika.ie

MUNSTER KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE, Glenflesk, Wilton Avenue, Bishopstown, Cork T12 X6XP

Telephone: 01-6908887 | Email: munsterkidneysupportcentre@ika.ie



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