



Fighting Heart Disease & Stroke



**At the Heart
of our Community**

2019 Annual Report

Company Information

Chairman:

Mr Kevin O'Reilly
Principal, Beechdale Consulting

Director:

Prof James Crowley
(Medical Director)
*Consultant Cardiologist,
Galway University Hospital*

Director:

Ms Marie Gavin
(Company Secretary)
*Associate Solicitor,
Ronan Daly Jermyn*

Director:

Dr Catherine Caulfield
*Chief Operations Officer,
Ovagen Group Ltd.*

Director:

Mr Mark Gantly
*Managing Director,
HP Galway*

Director:

Dr Tom Walsh
*Consultant Geriatrician
Stroke Specialist,
Galway University Hospital*

Director:

Dr Faisal Sharif
*Consultant Cardiologist,
Galway University Hospital*

Director:

Mr James David Toohey
*CEO and Founder,
SyncroPhi Systems Ltd.*

Director:

Mr James Ward
Solicitor, Patrick J Durcan & Co

Director:

Mr Paul Carey
CEO, Carey Developments

Director:

Ms. Mary Heffernan,
Tax Director, KPMG

Director:

Dr. Emer Curtis
*Lecturer in Accounting,
NUI Galway*

CEO:

Neil Johnson

Contents

A message from the Chairman & CEO	1
2019 Highlights in Numbers	2
Croí in the Community	4
Croí Heart & Stroke Centre	8
Community Stroke Support	10
Patient Community	14
Community Campaigns	16
Celebrating World Heart Day	24
Teaching Life-saving Skills	26
Supporting Families	28
Prevention and Cardiovascular Health	30
Education and Training	32
Awards and Achievements	34
Croí Fundraising Events	36
Community Fundraising Events	44
Thank you to our Volunteers	46
Financials	48
Major Partners and Supporters	50



Fighting Heart Disease & Stroke



VISION.

Our vision is to lead in the prevention, control of, and recovery from cardiovascular disease and to serve as exemplars of innovation and best practice.

MISSION.

Our mission is to prevent heart disease and stroke, save lives, empower and support families, communities and future generations to take control of their health and well-being.

GOALS.

- Build healthy communities through support, education and empowerment.
- Amplify the patient voice.
- Pursue the highest level of cardiovascular healthcare.
- Facilitate, participate and collaborate in vital research.
- Build capacity in preventive healthcare nationally through the National Institute for Prevention and Cardiovascular Health:
 - Engage with policy makers and health practitioners in pursuit of excellence in preventive healthcare.
 - Develop innovative models of preventive care and service delivery.
 - Produce a new generation of scholars and leaders in cardiovascular health and disease prevention.
 - Align with the World Heart Federation's mission and ambition to reduce premature death and disability from cardiovascular disease by 25% by 2025.

A message from the Chairman & CEO

Dear Friends,

Once again in 2019 our organisation was to the forefront in the fight against heart disease and stroke in the west of Ireland, and our research and education programmes continued to make an impact nationally. As we are funded entirely through our own revenue generation activities, we could not do this important work without your goodwill. We remain indebted to all who consistently and generously respond to our requests for financial and other supports.

Our mission and focus in recent years has moved very strongly into the community, focusing particularly on how we can contribute to the prevention of cardiovascular disease and supporting those individuals and families affected by heart disease and stroke.

We constantly reflect and evaluate as we are acutely aware of the need to deliver a tangible return to those who have entrusted their support to us. We are fortunate to have a team of highly-committed professionals who are united in the mission to serve their community.

Throughout 2019 we continued to develop the National Institute for Prevention and Cardiovascular Health, based in Croí Centre. In addition, our support of the Global Heart Hub is aligned with our transition to a patient organisation and provides us with unique opportunities to engage with international best practice in patient advocacy and engagement.

This report illustrates the many facets and impact of our work in preventing disease, saving lives, supporting patients and their families, and promoting health & wellbeing across the community. We hope you find this informative and that it reaffirms your support – as a donor, partner or volunteer. We are deeply grateful for your contribution and partnership.

Kind regards,



Mr Kevin O'Reilly
Chairman



Mr Neil Johnson
Chief Executive

2019 Highlights in Numbers



25,000+

visits to Croí
Heart & Stroke Centre



3,342

availed of free cardiac
health checks in the community



100+

families stayed in the
Courtyard Apartments



100+

fundraising events organised
to support Croí



660+

attended our Stroke
Support programme



393

people referred to our
specialist health programmes



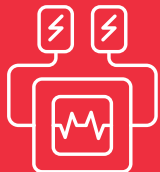
1,600

participated in the 5th
Annual Night Run



66,000

people received a
Croí Christmas card



821

people trained
in CPR



13

students graduated from the
MSc in Preventive Cardiology



148,000+

page views on our website
www.croi.ie



17,398

followers on Facebook,
Twitter, Instagram & LinkedIn

Croí in the Community



Healthy Ireland Partnership For Healthy Islands!

In the Spring of 2019, a series of Healthy Island health and wellbeing days were delivered across the West Coast Islands, including Inis Oírr, Inis Mór, Inis Meáin and Inishbofin - the first time such an event has taken place across all islands. This Healthy Ireland on the Islands initiative had great attendance from Islanders and involvement from local schools.

The Healthy Islands initiative was unique in its delivery and utilised a community development approach to promote health and wellbeing among those living on the geographically isolated islands of the West of Ireland.

Over 200 people took part in our award-winning Healthy Islands events, which included health screenings (pulse, blood pressure, weight, and BMI checks); healthy cooking tips; yoga; workshops on mental health and wellness; exercise tips; citizen information advice; and more.

These health and wellbeing events were supported by Galway County LCDC's Healthy County Galway initiative. Croí coordinated and collaborated with other community organisations, including Galway Rural Development, Healthy Ireland at your Library; Western Drugs and Alcohol Taskforce; Galway Sports Partnership; Galway Citizen Information Centre; Irish Rural Link; Pieta House; and AIDS West.



Highlights of our Croí community events

The Croí Health Team was busy throughout 2019, reaching thousands of people with community talks and public health promotion activities.

- Over **3,340** people attended Croí community heart health checks in the community and corporate screening events.
- Croí interacted with **3,000+** people through community Information Stands on heart health.
- Over **2,050** people attended Croí talks across community, public and corporate events.



Corporate health promotion

In 2019, Croí visited several work places offering a series of healthy lifestyle talks, courses, information stands and delivered heart health screenings. Highlights include:

- Risk factor screenings with Galway Hospice staff;
- Corporate screenings across 17 ESB sites;
- Female staff screening in Boston Scientific to mark the Go Red for Women campaign in February;
- Screenings with Arrabawn Dairies in Nenagh, Co. Tipperary; Top Form - Gort and Luftansa Technik - Shannon;
- Screening with Medtronic as part of their staff Wellness event over two days in October;
- Carey Construction as part of Health & Safety week in October/November;
- Partnering with the Irish Farmers Journal as part of a nationwide health and wellbeing initiative across 10 locations, with over 200 farmers screened in marts from Donegal to Kerry;
- Educational sessions with staff from Galway City Council and Coffey Engineering.

Croí in the Community

Croí Third Age Mayo

In Ireland and across the world people are living longer. County Mayo has one of the highest rates of over 55's, with almost a third of the population being in this age category. Instead of seeing this as a challenge, we see potential for our ageing population to remain engaged and continuing to make a positive contribution in their communities.

Our vision is to develop a culture in County Mayo where promoting cardiovascular health and well-being is a priority for the 55+ population.

Croí Third Age Mayo offers a new way of thinking about ageing and is specifically designed to promote and support the cardiovascular health and well-being of the over 55 population in the county.

Heart disease, stroke and diabetes are more common as we get older. If detected early, many heart conditions such as high blood pressure, heart valve disease, heart failure and atrial fibrillation (irregular heart beat) can be treated so that people can have a longer and better quality of life.



The Third Age refers to the life stage 55 years and older - embarking on the next chapter of life into the golden years of retirement.

Partners include:



Cúram Sláinte
Phobail, Iarthar
ag freastal ar Ghailimh,
Maighéo agus Ros Comáin

Community
Healthcare West
serving Galway, Mayo
and Roscommon



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo
Mayo County Council



Listen to your heart... The Key to Healthy Ageing

As part of Croí's Third Age Programme, which aims to reduce the impact of age-related cardiovascular conditions, Croí delivered several free public talks across Galway and Mayo.

Topics included **atrial fibrillation and stroke prevention; control and management of high blood pressure; and heart valve disease** and its treatment.

Events included:

- Castlebar: April 3
- Galway: April 10
- Galway: June 19
- Ballinasloe: October 23
- Ballina: November 13

Over **600 people** attended our Croí Third Age talks in 2019 across Galway and Mayo.



Pictured from left: Dr. Faisal Sharif; Dr. Aidan Flynn; Mr. Alan Soo.



Croí Heart & Stroke Centre

Preventing Heart Disease and Stroke

The Croí specialist health team work to develop and facilitate evidence-based health programmes and interventions which allow people to take control of their health and reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease.

Our programmes at the Croí Centre cater to high-risk individuals referred by their GP or consultant, as well as non-referral (walk-in) programmes like Yoga, Pilates and exercise classes for those looking to improve their general well-being.

Public Talks

Croí holds regular public talks throughout the year in the Croí Centre. Among these events was an information evening, Living More Confidently with your Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD), providing expert advice and support for people and the families of those living with an ICD.

Referral Programmes

MyAction

The Croí health team strive to deliver innovative models of preventive care. The Croí

MyAction Programme is an exemplar of an evidence-based and outcome-driven model, now running for the 10th year in Croí Centre.

The 12-16 week programme helps individuals and their families reduce their risk of developing heart disease, stroke and diabetes, and it continues to lead the way in its approach to cardiovascular disease prevention.

CLANN

The Croí CLANN programme (Changing Lifestyle with Activity and Nutrition) is a specialised 10 week, healthy lifestyle initiative which aims to help individuals achieve a healthy weight and shape through physical activity and healthy eating.

This programme is a unique collaboration with the Bariatric Medicine Service at Galway University Hospital. In 2019, over 250 people travelled from different parts of Ireland, including Donegal, Sligo, Tipperary, Roscommon, Westmeath, Clare and Limerick to participate in the programme.

Non-Referral Programmes

Exercise programmes

Being physically active is the first step to reducing your risk of heart attack, stroke, diabetes and a range of other health conditions. Achieving the recommended physical activity targets can reduce your mortality by up to 50%.

Croí offers a diverse range of activity programmes at its purpose-built Heart & Stroke Centre in Galway, with 17+ classes a week including:

- Back to Fitness
- Walking Football
- Zumba
- Nifty Lifters
- Pilates
- YogaSculpt
- Gentle Yoga
- Tai Chi
- Pilates
- Stroke Yoga

iBalance

Three new 8-week iBalance (Healthy Eating & Weight Management) programmes commenced, delivered to HSE staff in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon as well as an innovative initiative with the Galway Simon Community.



In 2019, **15,700+** individual activity sessions took place across programmes such as Yoga, Pilates and Tai Chi.

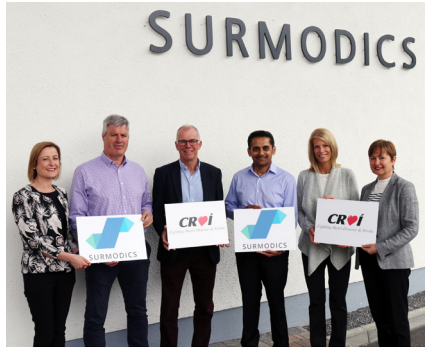


Community Stroke Support

Local Medtech Company Announces Community Partnership

In May 2019, Ballinasloe-based medical devices company, Surmodics, announced a unique 5-year community partnership with Croí, making a significant contribution to support of Croí's out-of-hospital stroke support programme.

Over the past few years, Croí has been developing out-of-hospital stroke supports, including offerings in the area of education, carer support, risk factor management, survivor empowerment, and communications rehabilitation. This generous gift greatly assists our work in this regard and is making a real difference to the lives of hundreds of people impacted by stroke in our community.



Pictured from left: Teresa Murray, HR Manager, Surmodics; Tom Greaney, COO, Surmodics; Kevin O'Reilly, Chairman, Croí; Gary Maharaj, CEO, Surmodics; Teri Sides, Senior VP & Chief Marketing Officer, Surmodics; and Patricia Hall, Cardiovascular Nurse Specialist, Croí.

World Stroke Day Event At Croí Centre

In recognition of World Stroke Day on October 29th, Croí hosted a free Public Talk and Short Film screening to help raise awareness of stroke and provide information to stroke survivors. Over 100 people attended the event, which included a talk by Dr. Tom Walsh, Stroke Specialist, Galway University Hospital.



From left: Patricia Hall, Croí; Tom Greaney, Surmodics; Nórita Ní Chartúir, NUIG; Dr Michelle Canavan, UHG; Dr Tom Walsh, GUH; Irene Gibson, Croí; Dr Karen Doyle, CURAM; Mary Deely, CURAM.

Stroke Support Group Summer Outing

It was a beautiful day for the Croí Stroke Support Group summer outing in June 2019. Our group of 45, including stroke survivors and stroke carers, had a great day for our annual summer outing, and we are indebted to everyone that made it a great success.

The group visited Rathbaun Farm in Ardrahan and Athenry Heritage Centre for a guided tour of the centre. The day finished with dinner at The Old Barracks Restaurant, Athenry.



New MyStroke programme

A new 4-week 'MyStroke' Education programme was launched in 2019. This programme was developed with input from stroke survivors and is designed to meet the educational needs of survivors around living well following a stroke.

Other activities

The Stroke communication group designed and developed an innovative training programme on how to communicate with stroke patients. The project was piloted with the hospitality sector.

The Stroke Survivor and Carer Christmas party took place mid-December with over 60 attending. Local children from the Galway Educate Together School and the Ignite Gospel choir participated in the event.

Community Stroke Support

Helping families and stroke survivors

It was Christmas eight years ago that everything changed for the Kelly Family. John Kelly, then a 48-year-old Garda Sergeant based in Loughrea, Co. Galway, suffered a massive, life-changing stroke.

John was rushed to Galway University Hospital and he spent the next 18 weeks receiving care across three more hospitals.

"It was a very exhausting time, and we had Santa come in the middle of that! I tried to make things as normal as possible for the children," says Mary, John's wife, speaking of their four children - the eldest twins were 13 years old and the youngest was just 6 years old.

Eventually, John returned home to his family in Cregmore, Co. Galway, but he was faced with the long-term effects of stroke. John suffered severe speech impairments, affecting how he speaks and his ability to understand what is being said. He was left with very few words.

John needed help. But so too did Mary, as a stroke carer. "A family member read online about Croí's Stroke Support services and we knew we had



Pictured: Mary and John Kelly

to get involved. John started with the Gentle Yoga class, before joining the Stroke Support Group and the Stroke Communication Group," says Mary.

With thanks to generous donors like you, Croí offers free stroke support services to stroke survivors, their family members and their carers.

John is now a dedicated regular at the Croí Centre. **He receives specialist support from the Croí Health Team, including biweekly communication sessions with Libby Kinneen, our Speech and Language Therapist.** John first met Libby five years ago and he has made real progress in gaining confidence with life after stroke. "More words... friends," says John.



Pictured: The Kelly Family

Mary also attends Croí as part of the Stroke Carers Group, "It's so great to meet like-minded people. For my sanity it was so necessary to talk to other people. Life after stroke is so lonely, you feel isolated... Croí is a place to come and feel relaxed, and where no one will judge you."

A huge milestone in John's speech work with Libby was actually being able to say the word 'Ballybofey', a really important word for John as it is his wife's hometown. "It meant something to John and Mary,"

says Libby. The 'Ballybofey' breakthrough gave John confidence in his speech.

"Croí's Communication Group has been wonderful for John," says Mary. "Sometimes John will say a word and it will make me smile. But he might never say it again. The loss of conversation has been one of the hardest things."

Patient Community

Global Heart Hub

Croí is a founding member of the Global Heart Hub, the first global non-profit organisation established to provide a voice for those affected by cardiovascular disease. Global Heart Hub is an alliance of heart patient organisations, aiming to create a unified global voice for those living with or affected by heart disease.

Throughout 2019, Croí took part in several Global Heart Hub campaigns, including Heart Failure Awareness Month and Heart Valve Disease Awareness Week.

Affiliated with:



Croí also hosted several Global Heart Hub events in Croí Centre, including the 5th Annual Heart Failure Patient Organisation Capacity Building Academy and the first Heart Valve Disease Patient Organisation Capacity Building Academy. Attendees travelled from across the globe, including Egypt, Brazil, France, Spain, Canada, the US, the UK, and more.



In June, we welcomed delegates from across the world to Croí for the 5th Annual Global Heart Hub Heart Failure Patient Organisation Capacity Building Academy.



Members of the Global Heart Hub Heart Valve Disease Patient Council, pictured in Croí for the first Patient Organisation Capacity Building Academy.

A Charter For Patient Involvement

In February 2019, 35 Irish patient organisations, including Croí, signed a Charter calling for greater patient involvement in the 'Medicines Assessment & Reimbursement' process in Ireland. The Charter calls on the government to improve the transparency, accountability and communication on how medicines are assessed and reimbursed by the State.

The Charter, coordinated by the Irish Platform for Patient

Organisations, Science & Industry (IPPOSI), with the support of the Medical Research Charities Group (MRCG) and Rare Disease Ireland (RDI), sets out 29 actions that the relevant State agencies (Department of Health; Health Service Executive, National Centre for Pharmacoeconomics) should take to inform and include patient perspectives at every stage of the process.

Community Campaigns

Croí raises the flag on heart failure danger signs

Throughout May 2019, Croí joined with The Global Heart Hub and over 20 organisations across 15 counties worldwide to help raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of heart failure.

By raising a red flag, we aimed to highlight the danger signs and symptoms of heart failure. For those experiencing these symptoms, we encouraged them to visit their GP and to ask the question "Could I have heart failure?"

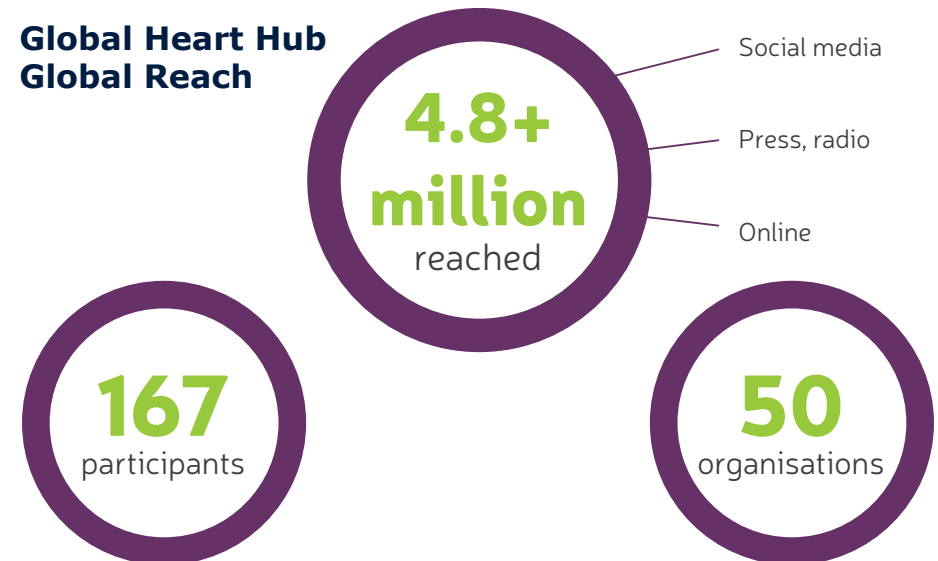
The earliest symptoms of heart failure are often very subtle, but it's dangerous to ignore them. Early diagnosis of heart failure is very important so as to ensure optimal treatment, and this can significantly benefit those living with the condition.



GLOBAL AWARENESS 2019



Global Heart Hub Global Reach



Raising Awareness of Heart Failure



Michael's Heart Failure Story

Michael Delapp is 69 years old. He lives in Clifden with his wife, Jane. He has two adult sons.

He is also living with heart failure.

Michael suffered a heart attack in 2005, causing permanent damage to the heart muscle. As a result, Michael had a stent fitted to help blood to flow freely, and subsequently was fitted with an Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD). An ICD is a small electrical device that monitors the rhythm of your heartbeat. When it detects an

abnormal rhythm (arrhythmia) it works to restore the normal heartbeat.

Michael was diagnosed with heart failure very soon after the heart attack because of the damage this caused to his heart. He experienced the common symptoms of heart failure, including fatigue, shortness of breath when at rest and fluid retention.

He said his heart failure had a significant psychological impact on him. "I had been a powerful guy...after the heart attack, it was like I'd aged 50 years... It also had a huge impact on

my family. I was no longer the invincible Dad. I really hit rock-bottom. Unfortunately when I left hospital I felt quite alone, I didn't know where to turn.

I feel it's very important for people to get as much information as possible on the condition, and on the support that's available. Once I was put in touch with a heart failure Nurse Specialist, Mary O'Sullivan, I felt much better. She told me to forget the life I had, and to focus on the one I have now. That had a major impact on me - I realised I wouldn't be able to recover if I didn't accept where I was at."

Michael went on to be referred by his doctor to Croí's CLANN Programme, a specialised 10-week, healthy lifestyle initiative which aims to help individuals achieve a healthy weight and shape through physical activity and healthy eating.

Michael said the programme had a huge impact on his life. He was able to cut down his weight and he says it helped him build his confidence back up, as he had been afraid to exercise after his heart attack. He went on to say "I didn't realise I could do as much as I could. Everyone was closely monitored, and your programme was individually

tailored to you. Partaking in the programme helped me with my confidence, and with managing my diet and lifestyle. It also gave me much more independence.

In addition, it had a profound impact on my outlook. I now have a very positive mindset, and I'm much happier in myself. I don't know where I'd be if I hadn't gotten some support."

When asked if he had any advice for those experiencing symptoms, or those who have been recently diagnosed with heart failure, Michael said "Get as much information as you can... find out what's available to you when you get diagnosed, it can make all the difference to how you feel going forward."

Michael was interviewed by Croí on his experiences of Heart Failure as part of the Global Heart Hub 'Red Flag Campaign'. This project aimed to highlight the signs and symptoms of heart failure - and encourage those experiencing these symptoms to go to their GP and ask "Could it be heart failure?"

Community Campaigns

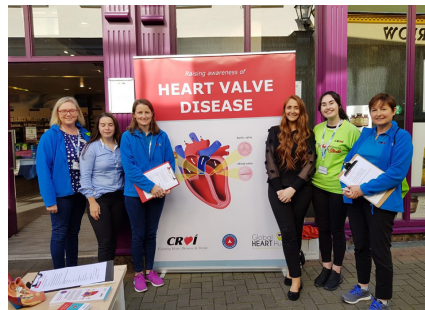
European Heart Valve Disease Awareness Week

From September 16th – 22nd 2019, Croí took part in European Heart Valve Disease Awareness Week. This week aimed to raise awareness and improve the diagnosis, treatment and management of heart valve disease in Europe.

Croí encouraged those in the 65+ age group to be aware of these signs and symptoms and if experiencing them, to visit their GP and ask 'could it be Heart Valve Disease?'

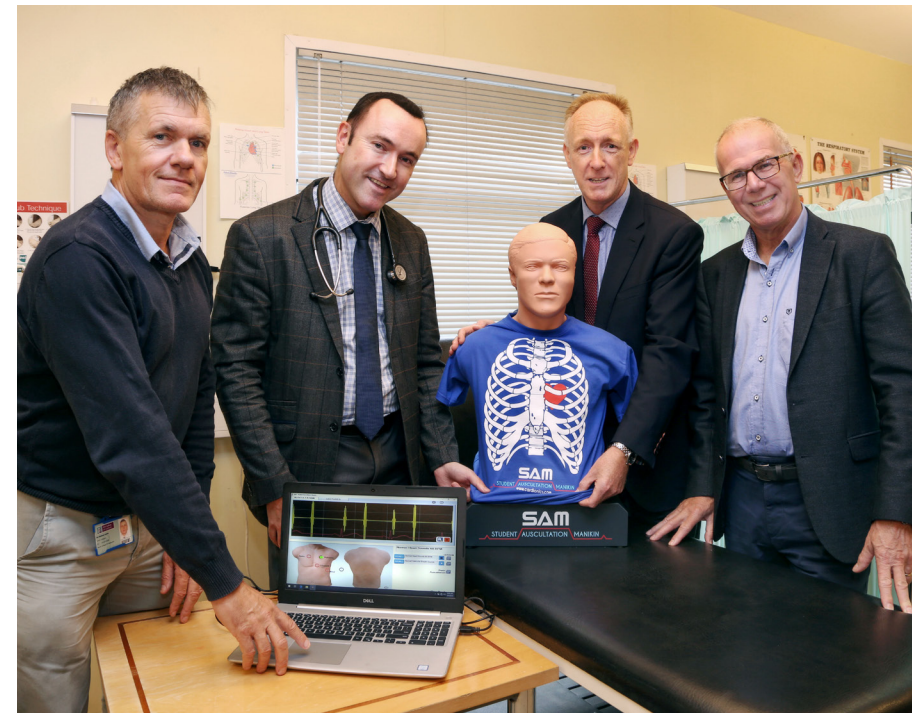
As part of our activities for Heart Valve Disease Awareness Week, our health team visited Galway city and county, Castlebar, Co. Mayo and Roscommon with an information booth on heart valve disease and conducted surveys on heart valve disease awareness.

Over **300 surveys** were collected which will go on to inform our work and awareness of heart valve disease in Ireland. We also identified several new and engaged patients who joined our heart valve disease patient advocacy group.



Croí's Boost To Medical Training At NUI Galway

To mark the 2019 European Heart Valve Disease Awareness Week, Croí presented the School of Medicine, NUI Galway, with the latest technology for teaching the skills of stethoscope examination.



Pictured at the presentation by Croí of a SAM high fidelity cardiorespiratory auscultation simulator to the School of Medicine were, from left: Mr. Mike Smith, Clinical Skills and Simulation Technician; Prof. Gerard Flaherty, Programme Director for Undergraduate Medicine and the MSc in Preventive Cardiology; Mr. Neil Johnson, CEO of Croí; and Mr. Kevin O'Reilly, Chairperson of the Croí Board.

Raising Awareness of Valve Disease



European Heart Valve Disease Awareness Week

The Story Of My Heart

By Pearl O'Kennedy

"10 years ago, following a visit to my GP, I was diagnosed with a murmur in my heart. As it wasn't causing any problems, I was kept under supervision. For the next few years, my heart was checked every six months, then every three months – during which time I had started to feel a little breathless.

One day, last October, I was going to have an angiogram. When the procedure was over, the doctor sat me down

and told me that I needed to have a valve replaced in my heart – the aortic valve. I was sent for a scan the following week to determine if I would have to undergo open-heart surgery. When I met with my doctor to get more tests done, he explained that he had been working on a new type of valve. After showing me diagrams of the valves and explaining how they work – as well as the potential complications – he asked if I would be prepared to let him use one on me. He told me

that this would be the first time this particular valve would be used in Europe. After some hesitation, I agreed to let him use the new valve.

A month later, I had the valve replaced. It was a transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVI) and I was conscious throughout it all. The procedure lasted for a little over two hours, during which time a nurse stayed beside my head. When it was over, I was transferred to a warm bed and given some medication to help me sleep. When I woke up, I was back in the Cardiac Ward. I felt good and was discharged three days later.

I got home before Christmas and had a lovely time. However, I did notice my hearing had started to deteriorate. Following a visit to the doctor, I was told that I had lost 50% of my hearing. After having hearing aids ordered for me, I learned that hearing loss is something that can happen a person if they've had work done on their heart.

Earlier this year, I received a letter from Galway University Hospital asking me to attend an eight-week cardiac rehabilitation programme in Merlin Hospital. This entailed going to the Cardiac Unit two

days a week where we did light workouts such as cycling, rowing, walking, and weight lifting. We were also given talks on diet and other general health topics. There were six men and two women in attendance and I was surprised to see some very young men there. When the eight weeks were over, I started to go back to my own gym. Now, I go twice a week. I spend half an hour on the machines and forty-five minutes doing water-aerobics. Life is good now and although I'm still coming to terms with having to use hearing aids, they are becoming part of my life.

Thank God, my heart is good."

- Pearl

Pearl is 80 years old and lives with her husband on Ragoon Road in Galway. They have six children and 12 grandchildren.

Pearl shared her story as part of European Heart Valve Disease Awareness Week (September 16 – 22, 2019), which raised awareness of heart valve disease in Europe.

Celebrating World Heart Day

The team at the Croí encouraged the people of Galway to make an important promise for their heart health in celebration of World Heart Day on September 29th.

With sign-sheets scattered across Galway in locations such as University Hospital Galway, Bon Secours, NUI Galway and Galway City Council, the Croí Team gathered almost **2,000 signatures** from Heart Heroes who promised to make a change for their hearts!

Our 2019 World Heart Day campaign reached thousands of people across Ireland and focused on building healthy communities through support, education and empowerment. Our campaign was also shortlisted for a World Heart Federation global award!

Heart health events: The Croí health team organised and delivered **60 interactive heart health events**, which included a combination of heart health screenings and

education sessions. Through engagement with local communities all activities were delivered free of charge and tailored to the needs and demands of the local population. A multi-sectoral approach was adopted, with a special effort to reach underserved communities, such as farmers, travelling community and migrants.

Illuminations: Croí engaged the support of a number of iconic West of Ireland landmark sites including the National University of Ireland, Galway, historic Eyre Square and Kylemore Abbey to 'Light up Red'. All embraced the concept with enthusiasm, and Kylemore Abbey lit up red for the first time in history!



Prof. David Wood, Past President, World Heart Federation, making the first Croí World Heart Day Promise.



2,000+ signatures on our Promise sheets!



Iconic buildings in the West of Ireland lit red



Teaching Life-saving Skills

Centre for Lifesaving Training

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) are key steps in the chain of survival when someone is a victim of cardiac arrest.

Croí's Centre for Lifesaving Training teaches the vital skills of CPR and AED use. In addition, training includes the management of choking in adults, children and infants and the recognition of the signs and symptoms of heart attack and stroke.

Croí also delivers Advanced Cardiac Life Support Training to healthcare professionals, including Basic Life Support training to 5th year medical undergraduate students at NUI Galway.

These vital lifesaving skills are making a significant difference in survival rates from out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in the West of Ireland.

- In 2019, over **820 members** of the public, family carers, primary care staff, hospital-based healthcare professionals and medical students were trained on Croí-led courses.
- Additionally, customised courses for HSE Carers', HSE Mayo and Roscommon employees, and Boston Scientific employees were delivered throughout the year.



Wife Saves Husband's Life Thanks To Croí CPR Training

April 19, 2019 – From The Galway Advertiser.

A family carer who completed a Croí CPR training course saved her husband's life a month later when he suffered a heart attack at their home in Galway.

The carer said that if she had not attended the Croí course, she would have disregarded his symptoms, probably passing them off as indigestion, and would have gone back to sleep. This according to her husband's consultant would have had fatal consequences for her spouse.

The CPR training initiative for family carers is funded by the HSE Carers Department and delivered in partnership with Croí.

The courses are designed to teach family carers about CPR and the relief of foreign-body airway obstruction in adults, children and infants, together with the use of automated external defibrillation (AED).

In the past seven year period, over 1,000 family carers in Galway have completed the life-saving course with Croí.

FREE CPR Training

To celebrate World Restart a Heart Day on October 16th, Croí held a **FREE CPR training evening** at Croí House.

Over 30 people attended the event and training was delivered by Sarah Molloy, a CCU nurse and the lead instructor for the Centre for Lifesaving Training here at Croí House.



Supporting Families

Croí Refurbishes Family Room At GUH

In 2019, **Croí funded the furnishing and redesign of a new family room** for the Coronary Care Unit at University Hospital Galway. The Coronary Care Unit is a specialist unit for patients recovering after a heart attack or with other serious heart conditions. It is the primary heart unit for the Saolta Hospital Group and patients from all parts of the West and North West of the country are cared for there.

With the help of Interior Designer, Rosie O'Connell, and with the funds raised through generous donors and supporters, Croí have transformed this room into a calm space for families to recharge during the most stressful time.



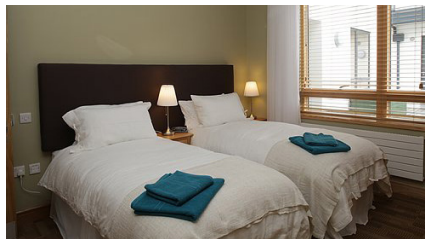
Family Support - Croí Apartments

As part of our patient and family support services, we provide free accommodation and other supports in our Courtyard Apartments at Croí House. At a time of crisis and trauma, we help families stay close to their loved ones undergoing surgery or receiving stroke or cardiac care at Galway University Hospital.

The Croí Courtyard Apartments consist of three self-contained ground floor accommodation units, located within a few minutes walk from the hospital. These apartments are funded entirely through the generosity of those who support our fundraising activities.

In 2019, **we helped over 100 families in their time of need**, from all over Ireland and overseas, with an occupancy rate of 100%.

Families who stayed with us travelled from Donegal, Dublin, Leitrim, Limerick, Louth, Mayo, Sligo, Tipperary and from as far as Australia, England, Scotland and the USA.



From Canada to Croí's Courtyard Apartments

"My husband Eddie and I were enjoying a wonderful holiday in Canada when he had a heart attack.

Eddie (60), was always a healthy and fit man. He was hospitalised in Calgary, Canada for 9 days and then taken by air ambulance back to Ireland and admitted to Galway University Hospital.

I travelled with him and arrived in Galway with a very ill husband and no where to stay. The nurse in Coronary Care put me in contact with Christine in Croí. From the moment I met Christine I was so well taken care of. I was accommodated in a lovely, cosy and comfortable apartment with secure entry gates. This was such a comfort to me while I was completely alone and so worried about Eddie.

Initially I was supposed to stay for five days, but because of complications with my husband's surgery, this turned into 13 nights. I was never made to feel I was overstaying my welcome. The kindness and support I was shown by Christine and all the staff was second to none. I was able to walk to the hospital 10/15 mins, no worries about car

parking or the expense of it. There is a well equipped laundry room, very essential for patients clothing.

My husband had a triple bypass and thank god is recovering well. Croí's wonderful work and facilities is totally dependent on voluntary donations. I have been involved in many fundraisers but can honestly say I have never seen money being put to such good use. Come on dig deep and support Croí!"

- *Bernie McCaffrey, Donegal, pictured below with Eddie.*



Prevention and Cardiovascular Health



Positioning Ireland as an International Leader in Cardiovascular Health

National Institute for Prevention and Cardiovascular Health

The National Institute for Prevention and Cardiovascular Health (NIPC) was established by Croí, in a strategic alliance with the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG). The NIPC aims to position Ireland as an international leader in cardiovascular health.

This past year saw a significant increase in our professional and academic membership. The NIPC continued to develop and deliver the MSc in Preventive Cardiology and the PgCert in Health Promotion. NIPC also delivered a range of training and education programmes, including Masterclasses and conferences for health care professionals.



Prof. Bill McEvoy presenting the iAspire results at the 2019 Irish Cardiac Society's Annual Scientific Meeting and AGM.

IASPIRE – Nationwide Study Of Irish Heart Attack Survivors

In October 2019, the National Institute for Prevention and Cardiovascular Health, based in Croí Centre, revealed that a new first-in-Ireland nationwide study of Irish patients who have survived a recent heart attack shows that while some have tried to change their habits, many aren't succeeding in minimising the risk factors which contributed to the heart attack in the first place.

Key findings include:

- 43% of those who smoked at the time of the heart attack are still smoking up to 24 months later.
- 39% are obese up to 24 months after
- 50% have central obesity which is where the fat is concentrated around the waist
- 31% never or rarely take regular activity long enough to work up a sweat
- 40% still have raised blood pressure; despite nearly 22% measuring their blood pressure at home
- 44% didn't get the flu vaccine last year
- 56% didn't reach the

goal of reducing their LDL (low-density lipoproteins) cholesterol

- Of those with diabetes, 39% didn't manage to reach the recommended blood sugar level goal

"This research shows that in certain aspects our health system is making a positive difference to the lives of patients who have recently survived a heart attack. However, many patients are still struggling with blood pressure, weight, cholesterol, exercise and smoking cessation issues," said Prof. Bill McEvoy, Professor of Preventive Cardiology, NUI Galway and Medical and Research Director, National Institute for Prevention of Cardiovascular Health at the Croí Heart and Stroke Centre (NIPC).

"Survival of a heart attack is a second chance at life, but only if risk factors are managed. While we're seeing better lifestyle habits in some patients, a considerable proportion – if not half – of Irish heart attack survivors are still not making the changes required to prolong their lives. The health system also needs to do more to standardize care for these patients," concluded Prof. McEvoy.

Education and Training

Preventive Medicine and Cardiovascular Health

The NIPC aims to produce a new generation of scholars and leaders in cardiovascular health and disease prevention.

The Masters in Preventive Cardiology is the only one of its kind in Ireland and is delivered in a unique community partnership with Croí and NUI Galway. In 2018/19, 13 students graduated from the Masters programme. 14 students commenced the 2019/20 programme. In 2019, four students enrolled in the new MSc Diabetes programme, part of the suite of Masters in Preventive Medicine and Cardiovascular Health.



2019/20 Masters Class in Preventive Cardiology

Conferences

NIPC conferences are going from strength to strength with over 245 attendees at our annual West of Ireland Diabetes Integrated Care Conference and over 320 attendees at our 6th Annual National Prevention Conference.

Short Courses

In 2019, the NIPC delivered CPD training and education programmes to over 350 healthcare professionals across ECG workshops, Cardiology Study Days, Motivational interviewing, Hypertension Masterclass and a Cardiac Rehabilitation course.



Prof. David Wood, pictured at the 6th Annual National Prevention Conference in Enfield, Co Meath.

Working with students

Croí is delighted to support students from across Ireland and globally in their healthcare education and training.

Last year we hosted 3rd level students from universities including NUI Galway and University of Limerick across multiple programmes, including: BSc Nutrition & Health Science; BSc Human Nutrition; BA Psychology; MA in Health Promotion; MSc in Preventive Cardiology; BSc Physiotherapy; MSc in Dietetics; and an International Post grad Physiotherapy student from the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences.

We continued our partnership with the Weldon School of Biomedical Engineering, Purdue University, Indiana. We hosted a student visit in May and are delighted to continue as their international community partner in biomedical engineering design.

In addition to 3rd level placements, we also facilitated transition year student placements from 2nd level schools in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon, and a placement as part of the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme Back to Work programme.

Teaching & Presentations

Croí staff presented and taught at various health care professional conferences and postgraduate courses, including:

- Contributed to the 'Our Heart, Our Minds' health professional training, Enniskillen;
- Chaired a session at the EuroPrevent Conference in Lisbon.
- Abstract on the 'Community Based Cardiac Rehab' programme was presented at the Irish Cardiac Society.
- Abstract on the Galway Simon Community iBalance programme was presented at the Street Medicine conference in Cork and at the NIPC National Prevention Conference.
- Poster presented on a hypertension project at the NIPC National Prevention Conference.

2019 Publications

- Professors Bill McEvoy and David Wood, together with other NIPC affiliates, achieved 25 publications in peer reviewed journals throughout 2019.

Awards and Achievements

Croí Scoops Three Awards At Top National Awards Ceremony!

Croí and its subsidiary, the National Institute for Prevention and Cardiovascular Health (NIPC), scooped 3 top awards at the Irish Healthcare Awards on November 20th at a special ceremony in Dublin. The Irish Healthcare Awards are Ireland's leading Awards, now in their 18th year, and they recognise innovation and excellence in the Irish healthcare sector.

The work of Croí and NIPC put the west of Ireland on the map when the charity was announced as the overall winner in three different award categories. The charity won gold for the Best Research Paper of the Year for a systematic review of low dose Aspirin in primary prevention of cardiovascular disease conducted by Prof Bill McEvoy, Research and Medical Director, NIPC. A second award was achieved by winning the Best Student Research Project of the Year for a study of severe obesity as a barrier to international travel. Croí won a third gold for the Best Public Health Initiative of the Year in recognition of a unique partnership with the Galway County Local Community

Development Committee which delivered a 'Healthy Islands Roadshow' together with 24 other Health and Wellbeing events throughout county Galway.

Speaking about the awards, Croí CEO Neil Johnson said, "this is great recognition for the innovative work being undertaken here in the west of Ireland. These awards are a huge endorsement of the dedication and commitment of all our health team and of all those who support us, as sponsors, volunteers and partners. We are delighted to win these three prestigious national awards which presented Galway and the west of Ireland in such a positive light."



Pictured from left: Lloyd Mudiwa, Irish Medical Times; Irene Gibson and Annie Costelloe, Croí; and Dr. Ciara Kelly at the Irish Healthcare Awards 2019.



Pictured from left: Prof. Gerard Flaherty, Croí Academic Advisor; Gabriel Brown, undergraduate medical student, at NUI Galway; Irene Gibson, Director of Programmes, Croí; Neil Johnson, CEO, Croí.

Croí Fundraising Events

Sold-Out Night Run Raises €70k For Croí!

The sold-out 5th Annual Croí Night Run took place on October 11 along the Salthill Prom in Galway. Over 1,500 runners and walkers, including 16 local corporate teams, came out in support of Croí's largest fundraising event of the year. This year virtual runners even took part in the event, running the Night Run from Longford and Chicago! Croí is thrilled to announce that over **€70,000 was raised, a new record**. 100% of the proceeds will go to support Croí's life-saving work in the community and at Croí Centre, thanks to the continued sponsorship of Evergreen Healthfoods.

Daragh O'Reilly, son of Kevin O'Reilly – Croí's Board Chairman, crossed the finish line first with an incredible time of 16:55!

"We are so overwhelmed by the incredible response this year! To sell-out in our 5th year is fantastic and we are already planning for a bigger and better event again next year. We're so grateful to all our participants, volunteers and our generous sponsors Evergreen Healthfoods and iRadio for making this our biggest year yet. Every euro raised will go directly to supporting the work at Croí and the fight against heart disease and stroke," says Christine Flanagan, Croí's Fundraising Director.



Terry's Night Run Achievements!

Terry Small from Castlegar, Galway, completed his second Croí Night Run, having completed his first 5km Night Run last year. "I really enjoyed it! I jogged half the distance and then walked the rest. I hadn't won a medal in years... I love showing it off," says Small.

Terry was referred to Croí, the Heart & Stroke Charity, in 2017 after having a stent inserted following a heart attack. He started with Croí's Active Heart Cardiac Rehab programme and now continues to attend Croí's exercise programmes every Tuesday. Great job, Terry!



Croí Fundraising Events

CRÓI 25TH TOUR DE LOUGH CORRIB

We are delighted to share that the 2019 Croí Tour de Lough Corrib cycle raised almost €65,000 to support the work at Croí and the fight against heart disease and stroke!

Our work at Croí is funded from the proceeds of fundraising events like the cycle, and we are deeply grateful for the support of our donors, supporters and volunteers who give so generously of their time and resources.

Thank you to our sponsors:

- Corrib Oil
- Al Hayes Motors Ltd.
- Caragh Precision
- Pelo



Charity of the Year Partnerships

Charity of the Year is a fantastic way to create a meaningful partnership and make a lasting impact on those suffering from heart disease and stroke.

We were honoured to have been selected as Charity Partner of the Year by three organisations, including Aurivo, Ireland West Airport and Sea2Summitt (Westport Hotel Group).



A walk with Aurivo in Enniscrone, Co. Sligo

Croí Fundraising Events

Croí Galway Race Evening



3rd Annual Croí Barna Golf AM AM



Croí Fundraising Events



Community Fundraising Events

Thank you so much for your support

Community fundraising activities help us to ensure that we can continue to provide the vital support services and programmes to members of the public who are at high risk or have been affected by heart disease or stroke.

We are so grateful for the 50+ community events that were held in 2019. Highlights include:

- 2nd Craig Connolly Memorial Walk
- Annual Darragh Kenny Memorial Cycle
- Annual Charlestown Tractor Run
- Annual AMYA Annual Walk
- Eamonn Shea Memorial Soccer tournament
- Cairde Sean Henry Concert



Annaghdown Friends Group Committee members presenting a cheque to Croí, being proceeds from their Annual St. Stephens Day Turkey Run which was enjoying it's 26th year in 2019.



Luigi Ryan with Tracy Connolly and her 3 boys and Cathal Dineen at the 2019 Cheque Presentation for the 2nd Craig Connolly Memorial Walk



Luigi Ryan from Croí pictured with Mike Cubbard, Mayor of Galway and members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association Ireland for the Annual 5K charity walk



Long Serving Ballina Friends Group members, Tommy Cronin, Goretti O'Donnell, Kathleen O'Donnell and Seamus Smyth presenting a cheque to Croí from their fundraising activities.



Luigi Ryan pictured with members of the McLoughlin family at the 2019 cheque presentation for the 6th Annual Eugene McLoughlin Memorial Tractor Run



Family and friends of the Annual Darragh Kenny Memorial Walk & Cycle Committee at the 2019 cheque presentation for €12,054



Long serving members of the Achill Friends Group presenting a cheque to Croí from their fundraising efforts at their 2019 Annual Pancake Tuesday Whist Game at the Achill Sound Hotel. (Missing from photo: Klaus Sweeney)



Members of Croí Friends Westport, presenting the proceeds of a golf am and church gate collection, from left: Christy O'Malley, Ger Mc Ging, Marie Moran, Mel King, Joe Gibbons, Maura Connolly, Luigi Ryan, Neil Johnson, and Martin Connolly.



The Agitators, winners of the men's 7th Annual Eamonn Shea memorial 7-a-side soccer tournament



Some of the top Irish musicians, including Matt Keane, who took part in the Cairde Sean Henry Music Concert in aid of Croí and Cancer Care West

Thank you to our Volunteers

We are so lucky to have amazing volunteers at Croí and we are very grateful for all the time and work you have dedicated to us! **Over 250 volunteers supported Croí with our fundraising events in 2019!**

In 2019, we launched 'Hearts of Gold' to acknowledge exceptional volunteers. We are indebted to so many, but each year we will highlight a few volunteers who have made such a huge impact to our work.

Stephen Hosty

In recent years, Stephen started volunteering with Croí and very quickly became an integral and invaluable part of our fundraising and event logistics team. Stephen has become an ever present and pivotal member of our fundraising team, giving generously of his time and experience in a totally voluntary capacity. His commitment to supporting Croí, willingness to serve and overall altruism is inspirational. We thank you Stephen for your enormous contribution and friendship!



Vicky Harkin

Over 10 years ago, Vicky was engaged by Croí to introduce yoga to our health programmes. Little did we know then that her popularity as a teacher would lead to such a huge following - now we have several yoga classes every week in Croí Centre.



Vicky noticed that many of those attending her classes were recovering from either a heart or stroke event and their needs were slightly different to her usual yoga students. She decided to volunteer her time and expertise to develop and deliver a customised yoga programme for those with chronic conditions and so began her weekly classes in gentle yoga, yoga for stroke survivors and even armchair yoga for those with limited mobility.

We thank you Vicky for the kindness and compassion you show to those with health challenges and for the meaningful difference you make to their lives.

'Volunteers don't necessarily have the time, they just have the heart' - Elizabeth Andrew.



NUIG Student Volunteer Rajath Sagar taking part at Terryland Shopping Centre during our Annual World Heart Day Collection



Some of our Volunteer heroes pictured at our SOLD OUT 5th Annual 5k Night Run in Salthill



Monica and Pat O'Leary getting into the festive spirit volunteering at the Croí Stall at the Galway City Christmas Market



Mary and Emer O'Sullivan pictured enjoying their volunteer experience at the 25th Annual Tour De Lough Corrib Cycle in June



Volunteer Heroes CK, Vaishnavi and Sandra helping out at our annual Marks & Spencer bagpacking event for World Heart Day 2019



Volunteers Shrishyal and Libin pictured with Luigi from Croí at the Annual Volunteer Appreciation Night



Long serving Volunteer Colm McDonagh with his grandchildren Aoife and Aidan

Financials

Our total income for 2019 was **€2.33m**, the majority of which was generated from donations, sponsorships and fundraising activities. We received grant support for our work through HSE Section 39 Grants, totalling €330,000.

We take very seriously our obligation to ensure that all income is used effectively and efficiently in support of our mission and goals. We are governed by a Board of voluntary non-executive Directors who do not receive any remuneration or compensation. We adhere to the highest standards of governance and accountability having adopted the Code of Governance for Charities and the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising.

Each year, our organisation undergoes an independent audit and we file accounts with the Companies Registration Office. We are also registered with the Irish Charities Regulator.

This year, our multidisciplinary team worked across the areas of Nursing, Physiotherapy, Exercise & Fitness, Dietetics & Nutrition, Diagnostics, Education & Training, Research, Fundraising and Programme Administration. Each year, our

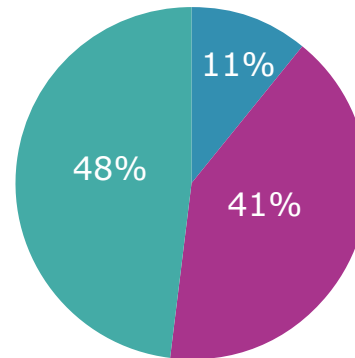
staff engage with hundreds of stakeholders, from Courtyard Apartment guests to healthcare professionals, collaborative partners, policy makers, patients and carers.

We are here to serve our community.

Our work would not be possible without the tireless support of so many. You – our volunteers, donors, fundraisers, corporate and educational partners – help us make a real difference and literally save lives.

Our ability to innovate and to save lives depends on the generous financial support you afford us. We are deeply grateful for this and we do not take it for granted.

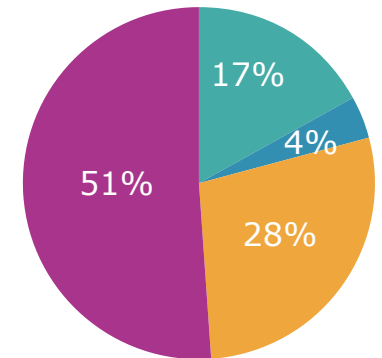
How our work is funded



Total Income 2019 = €2.33m

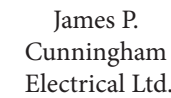
- 11% State grants
- 41% Fundraising activity & donations
- 48% Earned income and programme funds

Your money at work



- 17% Cost of Income Generation, Management, Administration & Governance
- 4% Patient and Family Support Accommodation
- 28% Research, Training and Education
- 51% Prevention and Recovery Programme Delivery

Major Partners and Supporters





Fighting Heart Disease & Stroke



Croí Heart & Stroke Centre,
Moyola Lane, Newcastle, Galway



+353 (0)91 544 310



info@croi.ie



www.croi.ie



@CroiHeartStroke