

AND THE WINNER IS...

CONGRATULATIONS TO MICK QUINLAN ON RECEIVING THE NOEL WALSH HIV CAMPAIGNER OF THE YEAR GALA (GAY AND LESBIAN AWARD) IN SEPTEMBER 2009.

Mick has been an HIV activist since the mid-80's when he was involved in setting up Gay Health Action (GHA) and other HIV and AIDS organisations such as Cairde, AIDS Action Alliance, and AIDS Helpline.

In 1992, with the former Eastern Health Board, Mick established the Gay Men's Health Project, now the Gay Men's Health Service, HSE. The only statutory gay health service in Ireland, GMHS continues to grow with extended STI services announced recently on the occasion of the GMHS 17th birthday.

Mick has been actively involved in gay safer sex promotions and campaigns over the years, from his appearance in the first photo shoot of local queers in

the safer sex leaflet Take Care Be Safe (1992) to more recent publications such as Play Safe Play Sexy (2007) and PEP and You (2008). Mick also organises the funding for the Rubber Up packs distributed free in gay social venues weekly.

In addition to managing GMHS, Mick is also actively involved with the Gay Health Network, Sex Workers Alliance Ireland, and the National AIDS Strategy Committee and sub-committees, to name a few.

Congratulations Mick from the Gay Health Network. Your continuing energy and passion is an inspiration to us all.



GMHS CELEBRATES 17TH BIRTHDAY AND LAUNCHES NEW STI SERVICES

THE HSE GAY MEN'S HEALTH SERVICE (GMHS) CELEBRATED ITS 17TH BIRTHDAY ON OCTOBER 29TH LAST, AND LAUNCHED EXTENDED STI SERVICES AND NEW PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS.

GMHS has become increasingly busy over the years with thousands of MSM (men who have sex with men) attending yearly with over 500 new registrations annually. Already this year there has been a dramatic increase in numbers attending, in particular for STI screenings.

General Manager Mary Kenny acknowledged the work of GMHS and its team, highlighting the health board's progressiveness with establishing the service in October 1992, before the decriminalisation of homosexuality in Ireland, in response to the needs of gay and bisexual men around the issues of HIV and sexual health screening.

GMHS continues to be proactive and innovative in catering to the needs of its clients and announced the following improvements:

- STI Screenings now available twice a week rather than once a week
- Results (including HIV) back in one week
- Negative results by SMS to clients
- New entrance and waiting area for clients
- New initiative for an HSE LGBT Advisory Forum
- Continued planning for increased access to services

Mick Quinlan, Manager of GMHS, outlined the development

of the service on the occasion of the 17th Birthday. "GMHS remains the only statutory gay health service in the state and we are proud of what we have achieved to date."

GMHS has produced a vast number of reports and other publications, has conducted research, and organised the Annual Gay Health Forums. The Outreach and Counselling services at Outhouse continue to increase with counselling now provided to 20 clients per week. GMHS also provides two facilitators to deliver an eight week personal development course for gay and bisexual men.

GMHS has been to the forefront in community work in partnership with other organisations including Gay Health Network, Johnny, Outhouse and BeLonG To Youth Service.

A special presentation was made to the daughter of Dr. Nuala Kilcoyne at the event. Dr. Kilcoyne is one of the earliest members of GMHS (since 1993) who very sadly has a long-term illness.

More information on GMHS is available at www.gaymenshealthservice.ie.



PRESIDENT OBAMA REMOVES HIV TRAVEL BAN

GHN WELCOMES PRESIDENT OBAMA'S RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT THAT HE IS TO LIFT THE TRAVEL BAN FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV FROM ENTERING THE UNITED STATES.

The removal of HIV-related travel restrictions in the US overturns a policy that has been in place for 22 years, and will come into effect at the beginning of 2010.

UNAIDS has called on all other countries with such travel restrictions to take steps to remove them. The International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights state

that any restriction on liberty of movement or choice of residence based on suspected or real HIV status alone, including HIV screening of international travellers, is discriminatory.



▶▶▶▶ LIVING WITH HIV+ SEX

GAY HEALTH NETWORK (GHN) WILL LAUNCH A NEW BOOKLET LIVING WITH HIV+ SEX IN DECEMBER. THIS NEW PUBLICATION IS ABOUT BEING HIV POSITIVE AND HAVING A FULFILLING AND ENJOYABLE SEX LIFE AND IS AIMED AT HIV POSITIVE GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN, AND OTHER MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN, AND THEIR PARTNERS.

The booklet was developed in consultation with individuals and focus groups of HIV positive and HIV negative gay and bisexual men, in Dublin, Cork, and Derry. The content was guided by the experiences, knowledge and needs of the contributors.

GHN believes that all men, regardless of their HIV status, have the right to healthy and satisfying sex lives. Being HIV positive can raise many questions for each individual, for example: "Do I have to disclose my HIV status before making a decision to have sex?", "Will I just have sex with other HIV positive men?". The booklet aims to answer

some of the questions and provide clear and accurate information and advice about sex and sexual health, relationships, disclosure issues, HIV transmission and the law, safer sex advice and tips, dealing with possible sexual problems, and advice in relation to drugs... all to enable men to make informed choices about their sexual life.

The booklet will be available in the usual outlets. It will also be available on www.ghn.ie in English and eventually in eight other languages. ▶▶▶▶

Living With HIV+ Sex



An information booklet for HIV positive gay and bisexual men, and other men who have sex with men, and their partners.



▶▶▶▶ REPORT ON 7TH ALL IRELAND GAY HEALTH FORUM (GHF7)

THE 7TH ALL IRELAND GAY HEALTH FORUM (GHF7) HELD LAST JUNE AT DUBLIN CASTLE WAS A VERY CHARGED AND EMOTIONAL AFFAIR WITH THE ABSENCE AND YET PRESENCES OF NOEL WALSH (RIP).

This was also acknowledged during the launch by Aine Brady T.D., Minister of State with responsibility for Health Promotion and Chairperson of the National AIDS Strategy Committee, and by Mary Kenny, General Manager HSE at the closing of the forum. The GHF7 theme "HEROES" was an acknowledgement of the many ways people have struggled, had fun, developed, led and survived, including those who are activists and working in the area of LGBT and HIV and AIDS services. A special tribute was paid to Noel by Mick Quinlan, Manager of GMHS on behalf of the HSE and the NASC Sub Committee Education and Prevention with a film presentation and a special souvenir programme. The first Noel Walsh Memorial Presentation was on LGBT Youth Networking in Ireland, led by the BeLonG To Youth Service and the LGBT Youth National Network around Ireland.

The programme included presentations on a variety of newly published reports including Real Lives 2: Findings from the All-Ireland Gay Men's Sex Surveys 2005 and 2006; Supporting LGBT Lives: The Study on the mental health and well being of LGBT people; Proud Voices: A study to identify the support needs of LGBT Young People in Counties Limerick, Clare and Tipperary; and Through Our Eyes: Perceptions and Experiences of LGBT People towards Homophobic Hate Crime and Policing in Northern Ireland.

Updates were also presented on the GHN 3-year action plan 2008-2010, the HIV and AIDS Education and Prevention Plan 2008-2010, and the next steps for the HSE report LGBT Health: Towards meeting the needs of LGBT people.

Workshops were extremely well received and attended covering a range of topics including working with trans-youth, positive sex for MSM living with HIV, counselling supports for people living with HIV, peer work and volunteering, and working with LGBT youth.

Overall GHF7 was very successful as outlined in the evaluation feedback. 69% rated the forum as excellent with 31% rating it good. Most presentations scored highly in particular the Noel Walsh Memorial Film. Presentations from GHF7 and previous forums will be available soon on GHN and GMHS websites or email gmhsadmin@hse.ie.

GHF is made possible by the GMHS HSE and the active support of the Department Health and Children, Social Inclusion Unit, Gay Health Network members and especially through the free contribution and efforts of the speakers and facilitators and of course the participants.

ADVANCE NOTICE:

GHF8 will take place on Friday 18th June 2010 in the Bedford Hall Suite, Dublin Castle. www.gaymenshealthservice.ie. ▶▶▶▶



▶▶▶▶ NEW WEBSITE FOR IRISH NEEDLE EXCHANGE FORUM

THE IRISH NEEDLE EXCHANGE FORUM WEBSITE WAS LAUNCHED EARLIER THIS YEAR AS THE FIRST DEDICATED ONLINE RESOURCE FOR NEEDLE EXCHANGE SERVICES IN IRELAND.

The site aims to provide those working in needle exchanges and related fields with a platform to initiate open, informed discussion and debate, and to identify and promote good practice in the development and delivery of needle exchange services. See www.inefie.ie. ▶▶▶▶

GHN WELCOMES EQUALITY TRIBUNAL JUDGEMENT

GHN WELCOMES THE RECENT DECISION OF THE EQUALITY TRIBUNAL WHICH RULED IN FAVOUR OF A MAN LIVING WITH HIV WHO WAS DENIED A HEALTH SERVICE BECAUSE OF HIS HIV POSITIVE STATUS.

After presenting to a chiropodist for treatment, Mr. James Goulding disclosed his HIV positive status and was then advised to seek treatment from another chiropodist.

The Equality Officer in her decision stated that "there is no legitimate reason why the complainant should not receive allied health services such as dental, chiropodist, podiatry, etc., the same way as any other person not living with HIV would receive it. It is clear that universal health and

safety precautions are in place precisely for this reason". The Equality Officer continued "... good practices and universal precautions are in place to protect everyone regardless of [HIV] status and to ensure best health and safety practices for everyone. They are not in place to provide service providers with an exemption from non-discrimination as defined in the [Equal Status] acts."

The Equality Officer also highlighted the issue of misconceptions regarding persons living with HIV, stating that "incorrect and outdated perceptions" resulted in the complainant being viewed and treated less favourably than a person not living with HIV.

GHN congratulates Mr. Goulding for his courage in taking this case, which has highlighted the irrationality of HIV-related discrimination often experienced by many people living with HIV, and further highlights the importance of ensuring equal access to health services for all people living with HIV.

The full case report can be viewed at www.equalitytribunal.ie.

JOHNNY...FROM ONE SUCCESS TO ANOTHER!

CONGRATULATIONS TO PHILIP HYLAND, WHO REPRESENTED JOHNNY AND WON THE 2ND RUNNER UP POSITION AT THIS YEAR'S MR GAY IRELAND.

The competition was a huge success and provided a fantastic platform upon which Philip was able to highlight the vital work carried out by all the volunteers at Johnny.

Johnny was established in the 90's to promote the health and well being of gay and bi-sexual men in Dublin and is continuing to move from strength to strength. Since August, our efforts have seen over two and a half thousand safer sex packs (condoms, lube and contact information for safer sex service providers) distributed

throughout the community in various venues including Panti Bar, The George and The Dragon. The main purpose and goal is to create a better awareness/knowledge of STI prevention, testing and treatment.

Johnny is currently recruiting volunteers to help out with a wide variety of activities. For further information please log onto www.johnny.ie or email info@johnny.ie.



"Keith Gill, Chairperson Johnny at the 8th Nordic HIV Positive Living Conference, Croke Park, November 2009"



COMMUNITY NEEDLE EXCHANGE SERVICES ANNOUNCED BY HSE

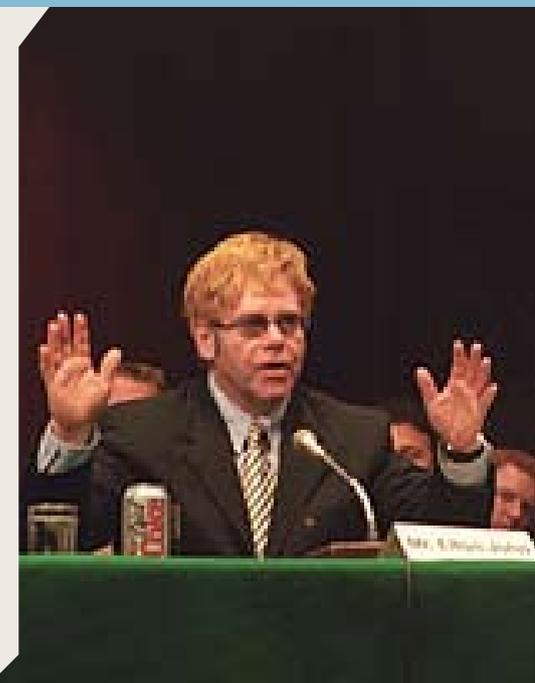
IN OCTOBER 2009, THE HEALTH SERVICE EXECUTIVE (HSE) ANNOUNCED A NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ELTON JOHN AIDS FOUNDATION AND THE IRISH PHARMACY UNION TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL NEEDLE EXCHANGE SERVICES (NEX) THROUGH COMMUNITY PHARMACIES IN 65 NEW LOCATIONS ACROSS IRELAND.

The HSE is committed under Section 34 of the National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016 to extending NEX where they are required. Mr. John Curran T.D., Minister of State with responsibility for the National Drugs Strategy welcomed the contribution of the Elton John AIDS Foundation commenting that "their partnership with the Health Service Executive and the Irish Pharmacy Union will provide a significant additional dimension to the work of the existing services aimed at preventing the spread of Blood Borne Viruses."

The Elton John AIDS Foundation will play a critical role in setting up this programme over the next three years, with the HSE signed up to continuing the programme after that. Anne Aslett, Director of the Elton John AIDS Foundation said "We know from our work in Eastern

Europe that providing injecting drug users with NEX not only prevents transmission of HIV and hepatitis but also provides a critical entry point into health and rehabilitation services. We wanted to identify a programme that would have a widespread and lasting impact on the HIV epidemic in Ireland. This programme can do exactly that. Our funding can accelerate the roll out of a network that will benefit anyone in the community who has to use injecting equipment in the future."

(Source: www.hse.ie)



OVER THE PAST 18 MONTHS THERE WAS A NOTICEABLE INCREASE (SURGE) IN SYPHILIS DIAGNOSES AMONG MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN (MSM).

A special representative committee from statutory and NGO agencies was organised by Dr Margaret Fitzgerald, Consultant, Public Health Department HSE. GHN, Johnny, and GMHS initiated a number of actions aimed at gay and bisexual men, and other men who have sex with men to raise awareness of syphilis testing including poster advertising, gay magazine adverts, distribution of a newly designed syphilis information leaflet, and a promotional banner on Gaydar. The GMHS initiated special promotions for the syphilis test prompting a noticeable increase in clinic attendance.

In July it was agreed to hold onsite syphilis testing at saunas in Dublin. The previous onsite testing took place in 2001 to 2003 for syphilis only. This time however, it was agreed to provide an opportunity for HIV testing, on an opt-in basis. Between July 9th and 26th the GMHS team (nurses, outreach worker and manager) provided onsite testing for syphilis and HIV at the Boilerhouse and The Dock Sauna, and also at Panti Bar. Testing was conducted via a blood test. Results were made available the following Tuesday on a "we call you basis if the result is reactionary/positive". Otherwise clients could call a special telephone number for results.

The response was overwhelmingly welcomed by all (including the men that did not take up the test invitation). A total of 131 men tested for syphilis and 116 of these

also tested for HIV. Of the men testing for syphilis a third (34%) tested for the first time and of those testing for HIV 29% tested for the first time. Over half (51%) were aged under 39 years and one in eight (12%) were aged 50 years and older. In terms of residence, 29% lived elsewhere other than Dublin city and county and 78% were born on the island of Ireland.

Preliminary results indicated a 1.5% positive rate for infectious (treatable) syphilis and a 3.5% rate of HIV positive diagnosis. Analysis of the results comparable to previous onsite testing in 2003 is currently being conducted. The rate of HIV positive diagnoses is similar to that of new attendees currently testing at the GMHS clinic. A quarter (n=33) of the men tested had never previously tested for HIV and 38% (n=44) had never tested for syphilis – a significant number.

There is an ongoing need to observe the numbers of syphilis and HIV diagnoses, and a continued need for awareness-raising initiatives among MSM. The report shows that approximately one third of clients taking part in the testing lived outside the Dublin area. Since October the GMHS has commenced promotion of its extended STI services and is continually looking at other ways to encourage testing and to increase access to syphilis and HIV testing for MSM. Further details mick.quinlan@hse.ie.



SAKA 2009: REPORT ON SYPHILIS AWARENESS

SAKA 2009: REPORT ON SYPHILIS AWARENESS, KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION (SAKA) SURVEY AMONG MSM IN IRELAND

Following a sharp increase in the incidence of syphilis among men who have sex with men (MSM) in Dublin in 2000, a syphilis campaign was initiated in 2001 that included targeted information campaigns, outreach work and onsite testing in gay bars, clubs and saunas in Dublin. Outreach workers also conducted a Syphilis Awareness, Knowledge and Action (SAKA) survey of 874 men attending various bars, clubs, and saunas (GMHP, 2003).

The results of SAKA 2001 highlighted that the majority of respondents (89%) were aware of the syphilis outbreak among gay and bisexual men, however less than half indicated that they had been tested for syphilis (47%). The results indicated that men under the age of 30 and bisexual men had the lowest level of awareness and knowledge of syphilis and were the least likely to test. The results also indicated a need to further inform men about the possible need for retesting due to the window period for detection and the risk of re-infection. As a result of this survey, a syphilis leaflet for gay and bisexual men was developed that highlighted these issues.

Although the outbreak peaked in 2001, the number of reported cases has not reverted to pre-outbreak levels (HPSC, 2007). However, recent data from the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) and the Gay

Men's Health Service (GMHS) suggests that the number of syphilis infections has increased over the last two years. In response to the increasing number of new diagnoses among MSM, a national Syphilis Awareness Campaign (Syph-Test and Syph-Action) was launched in April 2009 by GMHS, Rainbow Project and GHN to promote awareness of syphilis and to encourage testing.

Similar to SAKA 2001, a survey was conducted to assess the syphilis awareness, knowledge and action of MSM and to act as an outreach tool to increase awareness and highlight the need for testing and possible re-testing. The 2009 survey commenced during the Dublin Pride parade in June and was also conducted in bars, clubs, saunas and LGBT community centres in Dublin and Cork. A total of 543 questionnaires were completed. Of the 516 valid surveys, 415 (80.4%) were collected in Dublin and 101 (19.6%) were collected in Cork.

The results of the survey indicated that 68% of respondents knew that there was an increase of syphilis among MSM. Awareness of transmission through anal (89%), vaginal (80%) and oral (72%) sex was high, but fewer were aware of transmission through kissing (37%). Approximately 70% of respondents had knowledge that an individual can be infected with syphilis and not show symptoms, that testing for syphilis requires a blood test,

and that syphilis can be easily treated with antibiotics. Less indicated knowing about the possibility of re-infection (58%) and the window period for detection (53%). Overall, lower than average knowledge of syphilis was reported among men aged 19 years and younger, and men who identified as bisexual or other.

The majority of respondents (59%) indicated that they had tested for syphilis, with 61% of these men testing in the previous 12 months. Respondents who had not tested for syphilis were asked to indicate the reason for not testing. Of the 91 men who gave a reason, safe sex (15%) and being in a relationship (14%) were the most common responses, followed by not being sexually active (12%) and having never thought about it (11%). 61% of men who had not tested indicated that they were intending to test soon.

The survey also indicated that the Syph-Test and Syph-Action campaign reached 74% of respondents, with advertisements in GCN being the most widely seen (69%) followed by the syphilis leaflet (57%).

GHN would like to sincerely thank all of the participants who took part in the survey for being so generous with their time. Contributions to surveys such as this one are vital to ensure that we can develop and deliver appropriate services in the future. The full report will be available soon on www.gaymenshealthservices.ie.



RESEARCH ON THE NEEDS OF HIV POSITIVE MSM IN IRELAND

AS PART OF THE THREE-YEAR ACTION PLAN 2008-2010, GHN IS COMMITTED TO ENGAGING HIV POSITIVE MSM IN RELATION TO THEIR NEEDS AND CONCERNS, AND ISSUES PERTAINING TO SEXUAL HEALTH PROMOTION AND WELL-BEING.

To establish a foundation for new research on the needs of HIV positive MSM in Ireland, the Gay Men's Health Service, HSE engaged a researcher to conduct a secondary analysis of data relating to HIV positive MSM in the 2000 Vital Statistics Ireland report and the annual All-Ireland Gay Men's Sex Surveys from 2003 to 2006 to identify any specific needs in relation to sexual health and general well-being.

GHN facilitated a workshop at the recent 8th Nordic HIV Conference held in Croke Park to present the preliminary research findings of this secondary analysis to guide and make recommendations for new research on the needs of HIV positive MSM in Ireland.

The All-Ireland Gay Men's Sex Surveys are the most comprehensive piece of quantitative research among MSM in Ireland, as they collect important data on a range of issues related to the needs of MSM. However, with a small sample size of HIV positive men in each annual survey (approximately 3% of respondents in each survey), it

is difficult to make any significant conclusions specific to this group. To further characterise and highlight the needs of HIV positive MSM in Ireland, the research extrapolated the respondents who reported testing HIV positive in all five annual surveys. This created a combined sample of 135 HIV-positive men, or 2.6% of the total survey respondents.

| | 2000 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | Total |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Total Survey Respondents | 1290 | 1030 | 868 | 1165 | 856 | 5209 |
| HIV+ Survey Respondents | 38 | 25 | 27 | 24 | 21 | 135 |
| % HIV+ | 2.9 | 2.4 | 3.1 | 2.1 | 2.5 | 2.6 |

During the workshop, the findings from this research were discussed by highlighting data related to general health and well-being; treatment issues; sexual health and prevention; and life and social issues. Some of the main areas identified for future research were as follows:

- Issues related to general health, including mental health and emotional well-being, attitudes towards health maintenance, and barriers to accessing health services.
- Experiences and impact of treatment, including side effects such as lipodystrophy, concurrent use of recreational drugs, and attitudes towards treatment.
- Awareness and experience of risk reduction strategies and prevention technologies, and attitudes towards disclosure of HIV status to sexual partners.
- Social impact of HIV infection, including the effect of HIV stigma, acceptance in LGBT community, development of social networks, and discrimination due to HIV status.

Due to the focus of the surveys, there is a lack of information on issues specific to HIV positive men, highlighting the need to further identify these needs. The report recommends that a comprehensive national survey of HIV positive MSM is required covering general health, treatment, sexual health, and social issues to help inform future strategies that are inclusive of the needs of HIV positive MSM.

The full report will be available soon on: www.gaymenshealthservices.ie

UPDATE ON SWAI (SEX WORKERS ALLIANCE IRELAND)

SWAI IS AN ALLIANCE OF INDIVIDUALS (SEX WORKERS, EX-SEX WORKERS AND OTHER CONCERNED INDIVIDUALS) AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES.

The Mission Statement of the organisation is to promote the social inclusion, health, safety, civil rights and the right to self determination of female, male and transgender sex workers.

SWAI held its inaugural public seminar on 19th November 2009 at Dublin Castle. The seminar, which was booked out, heard from presenters from the UK, Finland, Sweden and Ireland. Most of the speakers were people providing services and support to sex workers with the exception of the Swedish speaker who is a sex worker and activist.

The aim of the seminar was two-fold:

- to initiate dialogue and debate in an Irish context, to allow the voice of sex workers to be heard and to challenge the idea that all sex work is violence by men against women.
- to learn from models of good practice and to hear about the effects on sex worker safety of criminalising paying for sex, often referred to as the Swedish Model.

Many of the presenters identified the benefits of harm reduction approaches as opposed to policies that only promote exiting or abstinence.

The importance of listening to sex workers and recognising the diversity of experiences of people involved in sex work was also stressed.

The final speaker, Dr. Nazih Eldin, outlined the objectives for preventing new HIV infections among sex workers as part of the HIV and AIDS Education and Prevention Plan 2008-2012 of the National AIDS Strategy Committee (NASC) and welcomed the debate.

A key message from the workshops was the importance of continuing the debate and not letting ideological differences prevent collaboration and the development of better responses to the needs of sex workers.

SWAI also launched its website www.sexworkersalliance.ie at the seminar. Notes and presentations from the seminar will be available soon on the website.

INFORMATION LEAFLET ON SAFER INJECTING PRACTICES

IN JULY 2009, THE HSE EAST COAST AREA NEEDLE EXCHANGE SERVICE LAUNCHED AN INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS.

The aim of the leaflet is to encourage and promote safer injecting practices, and provides guidance on how to look after veins and limit vein damage. It also provides advice on preventing the transmission or acquisition of Hepatitis and HIV. For further information contact John Craven at 01 2803335.

FORUM ON HIV SCIENCE AND THE CRIMINALISATION OF HIV TRANSMISSION

PHYLOGENETICS AND JUSTICE: HIV INFECTIONS AT THE INTERSECTION OF SCIENCE AND LAW

TUESDAY 8TH DECEMBER 2009 FROM 2PM TO 4PM

SEMINAR ROOM, HAMILTON INSTITUTE, NUI MAYNOOTH

This forum, sponsored by the Combat Diseases of Poverty Consortium at NUI Maynooth, aims to put high level virology in conversation with social science and so-

cial advocacy on the question of criminal law and HIV transmission. Speakers will include Edwin Bernard, Writer and Activist with GNP+, IAS, NAM, NAT, and UNAIDS; and

Dr. Stéphane Hué, University College London, Division of Infection and Immunity. The forum is open to the public and all are welcome. >>>>

HIV AND AIDS IN IRELAND

NEW FIGURES HAVE RECENTLY BEEN PUBLISHED BY THE HEALTH PROTECTION SURVEILLANCE CENTRE (HPSC) ON HIV AND AIDS IN IRELAND.

The new report shows there were a total of 210 new HIV diagnoses reported to the HPSC during Q1 and 2 of 2009. This compares to 212 in Q1 and Q2 of 2008 and 193 in Q3 and Q4 of 2008. This brings the cumulative total of HIV infections reported up to the end of June 2009 to 5,453. A summary of the figures relating to MSM derived from the report is as follows:

- Of the 210 newly diagnosed cases in Q1 and 2 of 2009, probable route of transmission was known for 176 cases.
- Of these 176 cases, 72 (41%) were among men who have sex with men (MSM), compared to 102 for the twelve months of 2008.
- 33% of newly diagnosed infections among MSM were aged under 30, 62.5% under 40, and 87.5% under 50.

- Of the 71 new cases among MSM, information on geographic origin indicates that 71% (51 cases) were born in Ireland and 28% (20 cases) were born abroad.

A full report on the statistics is available at www.hpsc.ie.



GHN MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP OF GHN HAS INCREASED OVER THE PAST YEAR, AND INCLUDES REPRESENTATION FROM A RANGE OF ORGANISATIONS INCLUDING THE GAY MEN'S HEALTH SERVICE, OPEN HEART HOUSE, GAY HIV STRATEGIES, DUBLIN AIDS ALLIANCE, GAY PROJECT CORK, OUTWEST, JOHNNY, THE RAINBOW PROJECT, BELONG TO, THE SOUTHERN TRUST (NEWRY), AND USI. THERE ARE ALSO A NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS.

Membership of the network is open to any individual or organisation with an interest in promoting HIV prevention and sexual health awareness among men who have sex with men. The commitment includes attendance at

approximately 4 network meetings per year; and a contribution to one or more sub-committees to assist with projects from our three-year work plan (available to view at www.ghn.ie). We would very much welcome

representatives of HIV-positive people throughout the country who could make an invaluable contribution to the network. Anyone interested in joining GHN can email info@ghn.ie. >>>>

HAVE YOUR SAY

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO SUBMIT YOUR VIEWS ON THIS NEWSLETTER TO FIND OUT WHAT WE CAN DO TO IMPROVE THE NEWSLETTER FOR YOU.

Do you find the newsletter useful (personally or professionally)? Are you satisfied with the content of the newsletter? Are there any particular articles or topics you would like included?, etc.

All feedback is welcome and appreciated. Email info@ghn.ie. >>>>

www.ghn.ie