

HSE and Sexual Health Centre, Cork to run campaign on World Aids Day ‘Everyone has a HIV status. What’s yours?’

Park Run in Ballincollig, Cork on December 1st 2018 to raise public awareness of HIV stigma and HIV testing

Dublin. 30th November.

The HSE Sexual Health & Crisis Pregnancy Programme and the Sexual Health Centre in Cork are running a campaign on World Aids Day, 1st December 2018, to increase public awareness of HIV testing and reduce HIV stigma. The tagline of the campaign is ‘Everyone has a HIV status. What’s Yours?’

The main campaign event is a Park Run in Ballincollig, Cork which aims to raise awareness about HIV stigma and testing. The campaign run will take place in collaboration with the Ballincollig Park Run at 9.30 a.m. on December 1st in the Regional Park in Ballincollig, Cork. The public are encouraged to attend the run and show their support. The campaign will also include social media messaging encouraging people to share the twitter handles and hashtag [@WADrunireland](#) [#WAD2018](#) [#checkyourstatus](#) to post messages of support.

Speaking ahead of the campaign launch, Helen Deely, Programme Lead of the HSE SHCPP said, “Ireland has made great progress where nearly nine out of ten people living with HIV know their status. There are a range of HIV testing options available including HIV testing in public STI clinics across the country, NGOs, student health services and a number of pubs and clubs in major cities. Some GPs also provide HIV testing and many pharmacies have HIV testing kits for purchase”.

Dr Derval Igoe Specialist in Public Health Medicine at the HSE’s HPSC said, “Early diagnosis is key to successful treatment of HIV and prevention of onward transmission. Late diagnosis needs to be addressed, as we know from research in the UK that those presenting late have a ten times higher risk of death within one year of diagnosis than those diagnosed promptly¹. Raising awareness of HIV testing and knowing your HIV status is therefore vitally important in preventing new infections and reducing the burden of HIV in Ireland”

Dr. Martin Davoren, Executive Director of the Sexual Health Centre, Cork said, “People living with HIV continue to experience isolation and stigma. Lack of public knowledge about HIV can reinforce stigma and have a negative impact on people living with HIV. The World Aids

¹ Croxford S, Kitching A, Desai S, Kall M, Edelstein M, Skingsley A, et al. Mortality and causes of death in people diagnosed with HIV in the era of highly active antiretroviral therapy compared with the general population: an analysis of a national observational cohort. *Lancet Public Health*. 2017;2(1):e35-e46.

Day run aims to address existing misconceptions and stigma to normalise the process of HIV testing”.

World Aids Day t-shirts and red ribbons will be available at the entrance of Ballincollig Park on 1st December. For more information on the Ballincollig Park Run please visit <https://twitter.com/WADRunIreland> and https://mobile.twitter.com/SHC_Cork

For more information on HIV please visit <https://www.sexualwellbeing.ie/sexual-health/sexually-transmitted-infections/>

For more information on public STI clinics, log onto <https://www.sexualwellbeing.ie/sexual-health/hse-sti-services-in-ireland.html>

Ends

Notes to Editors

1. HSE's Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) 2017 annual HIV report <http://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/hivstis/hivandaids/hivdataandreports/>
2. The HSE's Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) 2017 annual HIV report highlights that there were 492 cases of HIV notified in 2017. The HIV notification rate in Ireland has been relatively stable between 2015 and 2017 (10.1 – 10.5 per 100,000 population). More than half the notifications were in men who have sex with men (MSM), one third were in heterosexuals, and a small proportion (4%) were in people who inject drugs. Four in 10 of all those diagnosed with HIV presented with late infection, including 22% with advanced HIV infection.
3. The Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme (SHCPP) is one of the policy programmes within the HSE. It is charged with the implementation of the National Sexual Health Strategy 2015-2020.
4. The Sexual Health Centre (SHCC) is a Not for Profit, Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) established in July 1987 as Cork AIDS Alliance. In addition to providing up-to-date and non-biased information and education regarding sexual health and wellbeing, the Centre offers professional one-on-one counselling sessions and support groups for people living with HIV, rapid HIV testing, crisis pregnancy support and free pregnancy tests, sexual health promotion stands, educational workshops, and events in the third-level educational institutions, free condom distribution, 9-5 Monday to Friday Helpline, outreach work and sexual health workshops for a variety of vulnerable groups, and an out-of-hours STI clinic. www.sexualhealthcentre.com
5. National HSE Sexual Health website www.sexualwellbeing.ie
6. National HSE Man2man campaign <http://man2man.ie>
7. HSE KnowNow HIV rapid community testing campaign <http://www.knownow.ie>