



Press Statement

20th March 2024

College of Psychiatrists response to Joint Oireachtas Committee on Assisted Dying – ‘We can do better’

The recommendation of a report by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Assisted Dying to introduce both assisted suicide and euthanasia for people with terminal illnesses and between six and 12 months to live will have significant ramifications for palliative and end of life care in Ireland, and for the most vulnerable in our society.

Speaking today, **Professor Siobhan MacHale, Consultant Liaison Psychiatrist and member of the Human Rights and Ethics Committee of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland**, said: “The Oireachtas Committee’s recommendation of the introduction of assisted suicide and euthanasia in Ireland undermines Irish society’s strong focus on suicide prevention policy.

“Any terminal diagnosis is by its nature deeply upsetting and can often lead to a patient experiencing a wish to die in the course of the associated shock and grief. The College believes that we can do better in providing compassionate care to those who are dying than to introduce assisted suicide and euthanasia in Ireland.”

Dr Eric Kelleher, Consultant Liaison Psychiatrist and member of the Human Rights and Ethics Committee of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland, said: “We continue to strongly advocate for providing the necessary funding and resources to offer an optimal palliative and end of life care experience for patients, and for their carers. We need to identify and learn from the gaps in our care each and every time we fail to achieve this.”

The College believes that more time is needed to properly assess and examine the potential ramifications of the introduction of assisted dying and euthanasia in Ireland.

Editors’ note:

The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland is the professional and training body for psychiatrists in Ireland and represents 1,300 professional psychiatrists (both specialists and trainees) across the country. To become a specialist doctor in psychiatry (specialist consultant psychiatrist) a doctor must complete between six to seven years of the College training programme.

ENDS

Issued on behalf of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland by Gordon MRM

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