CPSYCHI COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS OF IRELAND

# 2024 ELECTION MANIFESTO

## *Don't Leave Serious Mental Illness (Further) Behind*

Serious Mental illness is real. It exists. It is indiscriminate. It affects a person's health, wellbeing and ability to lead a full life as an active member of our society, including contributing to our economy.

**1 in 4 PEOPLE**

At least 25% of our population will be affected by a mental disorder at some point in their lifetime. They will need support and treatment for severe mental illness.

***How serious are you about addressing and acknowledging debilitating, serious mental illness?***

There is no health without mental health. Mental health exists on a continuum from normal mental health to psychological distress to moderate-to-severe mental illness.

***Mental Illness affects every aspect of a life.***

Bipolar Disorder, Major Depression, Psychosis, Schizophrenia, Eating Disorders and Severe Anxiety Disorders all constitute Serious Mental Illness (SMI).

***Serious Mental Illness cannot be adequately treated by lifestyle, social support or a well-being activity alone.***

It requires a combination of evidence-based medical, psychological and social treatments delivered with compassion and understanding that respects the dignity and autonomy of the person. Without any help or intervention, symptoms persist, intensify and become deeply debilitating for the person, seriously interrupting their regular life, including their work. These symptoms will not go away by themselves.

## *4 Ways the next Government MUST Act to Address Serious Mental Illness*

1. **Provide adequate funding of minimum 2 billion euro plus capital expenditure for specialist mental health services/hospitals.**
   1. Prioritise national recruitment and retention plans and digital health systems
   2. Prioritise modernising fit-for-purpose mental health service premises and facilities

2. **Improve and fund mental health services at primary care level for those who require treatment for milder forms of mental illness or psychological distress.**

3. **Create essential lead roles to drive development of services for mental illness.**
   1. Appoint a 'Super' Junior Minister for Mental Health & Illness/ a Cross Departmental Lead for Mental Health and Illness.
   2. Appoint a Mental Health and Illness Lead in the HSE.

4. **Fund training to ensure an adequate supply of future doctors in psychiatry.**

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Research indicates that
**FOR EVERY**
**€1 SPENT**
on Mental Health Services
There is a potential
**SAVING OF**
**€4**

(London School of Economics & Politics)

## €8 Billion

Mental health problems cost the Irish economy over €8 billion a year - the indirect cost of €4.17 billion on labour market and direct costs of €2.23 billion on health systems and €1.9 billion on social benefits.

(OECD Health at a Glance 2018 report)

### Admissions to Irish hospitals in 2023 for serious mental illness

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| 15,631 | admissions to Irish adult psychiatric units and hospitals |
| 5,838 | new admissions to in-patient treatment (up 8% from 2022) |
| 322 | admissions were under 18 years old |
| 1,449 | 20-24 year-olds made up the highest rate of admissions |
| 77 | under-18 year-olds were admitted for eating disorders. This accounted for 1 in 4 18-year-olds admitted overall. |

Data Source: HRB

## The Role of Psychiatrists

Psychiatry is the branch of medicine which is concerned with the understanding, assessment, and diagnosis of mental illness. These illnesses can involve emotions, behaviour, perceptions and thinking. Psychiatrists are key to the delivery of emergency and continuing support to people with serious mental illness.

Psychiatrists are highly trained medical doctors who deliver evidence based care in a collaborative way with the person and their family (with the person's permission). Psychiatrists work in a number of different places including hospitals, emergency departments, community mental health services, people's own homes, residential centres, nursing homes and prisons.

In addition to medication, significant emphasis is placed on a holistic approach which means taking into account social, occupational, relational and creative elements of a person's life and how best to support them on the road to recovery and maintaining that recovery. This approach uses expertise from other disciplines such as nursing, occupational therapy, psychology and social work - the multidisciplinary team.

**The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland** is the professional body for psychiatrists in the Republic of Ireland with circa 1300 members. It is the sole body recognised by the Medical Council and the HSE for the training of doctors to become specialists in psychiatry and for the continuing assurance of the career long competence of specialists in psychiatry. The mission of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland is to promote excellence in the practice of psychiatry.