



IRISH ASSOCIATION OF CARDIAC REHABILITATION

Newsletter: April 2010

Dear Colleague,

Welcome to the Spring Edition of the IACR newsletter. We have decided to focus this newsletter on some of the advocacy work being undertaken by the IACR on your behalf. We are all aware of the need to advocate for the protection of cardiac rehabilitation services and in recent months the IACR have had a Political Question (PQ) raised in the Dail, and last December, made a pre-budget submission to the Minister for Finance.

More recently we have made a submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health & Children in an effort to inform them of the current issues facing Cardiac Rehabilitation and secure the committee's support for rehabilitation units around the country. We are hopeful that this submission will lead to a meeting with the committee at which the IACR will have an opportunity to present its case in more detail.

The full submission and other papers are available on the website – www.iacr.info. For more information on the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health & Children visit – www.oireachtas.ie

Wishing you the very best in the coming months,

Sophie Charles

President, IACR

Submission to Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health & Children, in respect of the importance of protecting Cardiac Rehabilitation Services in Ireland. Submitted by the IACR, March 2010.

Participation in cardiac rehabilitation should be available to all cardiac patients who require it.

(IACR Guidelines 2007)

Introduction

The Irish Association of Cardiac Rehabilitation (IACR) is grateful to the Chair and its members for taking the time to consider this submission highlighting issues relating to services in Ireland's 38 cardiac rehabilitation centres.

What issues are the IACR looking to highlight to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health & Children ?

Recent cutbacks have hit Cardiac Rehabilitation hard and the quality of the service is under threat. The IACR would like to highlight the following issues.

The need to protect cardiac rehabilitation from cutbacks in healthcare system.

Less than 50% of eligible patients have access to cardiac rehabilitation. Furthermore, increased demand for cardiac rehabilitation due to an aging population and an increase in the numbers of people surviving a cardiac event, means that demand for cardiac rehabilitation looks set to increase into the future. In spite of this, staff cuts have been imposed over the last year in 13 out of the country's 38 (34%) cardiac rehabilitation centres.

The need to ensure availability of a multi-disciplinary team in each cardiac rehab centre.

Cardiac Rehabilitation in Ireland is managed by a Cardiac Rehab Co-ordinator in each of the 38 centres who direct patients to services needed and harness resources of the wider hospital and community system. The cardiac rehabilitation co-ordinator works with and is supported by Cardiologists, Physiotherapists, Nurses, Occupational Therapists, Dieticians, Pharmacists, Psychologists and Social Workers. It is well documented that this multidisciplinary approach is a key success factor in cardiac rehabilitation. Resources must be allocated for the appointment of staff, particularly multi-disciplinary staff, to ensure a thorough rehab service is offered to patients. The importance of the role of cardiac rehabilitation co-ordinator must also be recognised and supported.

The need to streamline approach and structure of cardiac rehabilitation in different centres.

Cardiac rehabilitation centres offer different services depending on their resources and staffing levels. This means that not all patients receive the optimal cardiac rehabilitation to which they are entitled and deserve.

Need for the development of Phase 3 in the community and the introduction of Phase 4 nationwide.

Phase 3 cardiac rehabilitation incorporates exercise training in combination with ongoing education and psychosocial and vocational interventions. *Phase 4* constitutes the components of long-term maintenance of lifestyle changes and professional monitoring of clinical status.

Patients who receive both Phase 3 and Phase 4 cardiac rehabilitation are less likely to suffer subsequent coronary events than those that don't. These phases play a major preventative role, reducing the burden on acute hospital services. They need to be supported and developed.

CONCLUSION

Cardiac Rehabilitation Programmes are a very effective way to help individuals who experience a cardiac event to deal with the consequences of their illness and support and facilitate them on the road to recovery. It is a cost effective programme with great scope for development. It is imperative that cardiac rehabilitation is prioritised to ensure the necessary resources are available to this service into the future.

The IACR would welcome the opportunity to appear before the committee to discuss in more detail the issues raised in this submission.

THIS IS A SUMMARY OF THE SUBMISSION – SEE WWW.IACR.INFO FOR FULL VERSION

The IACR has plans for the next stage of its advocacy drive and will be in touch in the coming months to let you know how you can become involved.

Conference & AGM 2010

This year's conference and AGM will take place on Friday 16th & Saturday 17th of October in the Radisson Hotel Stillorgan, Dublin. Full details will be available on the website soon and in the Summer Newsletter.

Contact Us:

The IACR welcomes your feedback and suggestions. There are a number of ways to contact us – via the contact page on the website – www.iacr.info or by emailing Barbra Dalton, National Co-ordinator – bdalton@irishheart.ie We look forward to hearing from you.

Call for help from Irish Heart Foundation

Help Us Strengthen the Chain of Survival

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Irish Heart Foundation's annual Happy Heart Weekend which is raising money to strengthen the *Chain of Survival* all around Ireland so that less people will die from sudden cardiac arrest.

Communities all over Ireland will be out in force May 13-15 selling hearts and trolley key-rings to members of the public in a bid to raise €620,000. Hopefully with the support of our volunteers, more people will call 999, more people will know CPR, more people will know how to use a defibrillator and more victims will make it to hospital and become survivors.

Cardiac Rehab Units can play their part in the campaign by hosting a stand in hospital receptions and recruiting volunteers to sell hearts to visitors. Happy Heart Weekend is also an opportunity to spread vital heart health messages to prevent heart attack and stroke. Simply order Irish Heart Foundation literature with any fundraising materials. To order hearts, trolley key-rings, poster and balloons please contact **Ciara Mealy** on **01 668 5001** or email cmealy@irishheart.ie or visit www.happyheartweekend.ie.

Where the Money Goes

€5 provides three heart attack patients with IHF information booklets on their heart condition.

€10 provides an Irish primary school teacher with an IHF busy breaks physical activity pack to get kids active.

€25 funds a place for a heart or stroke patient to attend an IHF information day about their condition.

€50 funds vital heart and stroke research for one hour.

€100 funds an IHF Heart and Stroke Helpline nurse for a day giving support to patients and families.

€500 funds an IHF stroke nurse for one day.

€750 funds our lifesaving CPR and resuscitation programmes for one day.