

Announcing the shortlist for the Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards 2010

Congratulations to our sixteen shortlisted candidates!

Dublin, 25th March 2010 - The Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards 2010 announced today the sixteen shortlisted candidates that have been recognised for their outstanding efforts to communicate with people in a crystal clear way.

The aim of the awards is to recognise anyone working in the healthcare arena that is making real efforts to ensure their communications with the public are “crystal clear” and easy to understand. Health literacy is a person’s ability to understand basic health information whether they receive it in writing, in person or over the phone. International research has shown that patients who are better informed about their health have more effective consultations with their healthcare provider, are better informed about the medicines they are prescribed, are more likely to comply with their medication and as a result have improved health outcomes.¹

As a result of being shortlisted, each candidate will be invited to attend the awards ceremony in Dublin on 19th April 2010.

This year, there were 120 entries across five categories in the Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards. Entries came from receptionists in GP’s surgeries, doctors, nurses, patient groups, and journalists.

Ms Ciara O’Rourke, External Affairs Director, MSD and a judge of the awards commented, “This year we received over 100 entries into the Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards highlighting the strong level of interest in health literacy amongst both academics and practitioners. It is important we all continue to improve health literacy by communicating more clearly and making information and services more accessible to the public so they can make informed decisions about their health.”

Also speaking at the announcement of the shortlist, Ms. Inez Bailey, Director of the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), said, “We were delighted to have had such a strong response for the Awards again this year. People working in the healthcare sector play an important part in improving health literacy and should attempt to make their materials as clear as possible to the intended audience. Using Plain English, and drawings and illustrations is just one simple way that this can be achieved. We encourage others to follow in the footsteps of our shortlisted candidates and improve health communication for patients.”

The Awards are a partnership between MSD and the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) with representation on the judging panel from the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), the Irish Practice Nurses Association (IPNA), UCD, a General Practice and the Adelaide Hospital Society.

For further information on the Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards, log on to www.healthliteracy.ie.

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Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards 2010

Shortlist

Category A – Best Project in General Practice

- Arthritis Ireland, 'Let's Talk Arthritis'
- Jimmy Fearon, DEBRA Ireland, 'My Diary'/ EB passport'
- Irishtown and Ringsend Primary Care Team, Health Service Executive, 'Irishtown Primary Care Centre Brochure'

Category B- Best Project in a Hospital

- Una O'Brien, Staff Midwife, Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda, 'Txt and Twitter ur Teenage Mums. B in Touch.'
- Day Theatre Staff, Mid Western Regional Hospital, 'Development of a pre-operative booklet for children attending Day Surgery'
- Speech and Language Department, Peamount Hospital, 'Facilitating Mealtime Choices'

Category C- Best project in the Community or in a Social Setting

- Christine Murphy-Whyte, Chairperson, Europa Donna Ireland, '9 things you should know about breast cancer'
- Trine Kelly and Project Team, Residential Child Care Service, HSE Dublin North East, 'Funky Food Cookery Book'
- Fatima & Dolphin Community Health Projects, 'Fatima and Dolphin Community Health Projects'
- Irish Osteoporosis Society, 'Osteoporosis: the Silent Disease DVD and accompanying Educational Pack'

- Gemma Quinn and C-diff and Families, Infection Prevention & Control Manager, PCCC HSE West Co. Clare 'Hygiene & Infection: Control Advice in the Home'

Category D- Best Health Promotion Project

- Sarah Mumford and Maeve McNamara, Senior Community Dietician, Health Service Executive, 'Milk it, much Ado about nothing'
- The Screening Promotion Team, National Cancer Screening Service, 'Promoting Awareness of both the BreastCheck and CervicalCheck Programmes'

Category E- Best Health Communication through Journalism

- Operation Transformation Team, RTE, 'Operation Transformation website'
- Joy Orpen, Journalist, Sunday Independent, 'Racing for life'
- Samantha Libreri, Journalist, RTE News, "Report focusing on cervical cancer"

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Notes to Editor

Health literacy

Health literacy is an important issue in Ireland today. According to the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1997, over 50% of the Irish population is affected in some way by literacy difficulties.

Research shows people with literacy difficulties find it difficult to read and understand many health related items. As a result many people may not feel capable of making important decisions that will impact on their health.

The results of an Irish survey in 2007 revealed that:

- One in five Irish people are not fully confident that they understand all of the information they receive from their healthcare professional.

- Forty three percent said they would only sometimes ask for clarification if they did not understand something their healthcare professional said to them.
- One in ten people admitted taking the wrong dose of medication because of failure to understand instructions.
- Two-thirds of respondents also admitted to having difficulty understanding signs and directions in Irish hospitals some of the time, with one in five stating they have difficulty most of the time.

About MSD

Merck & Co., Inc. and Schering-Plough are in the process of completing a merger globally. In Ireland, the newly combined MSD now employs more than 2,300 people across six manufacturing sites, an animal health commercial operation and two sales, marketing and clinical research centres based in counties Carlow, Cork, Dublin, Tipperary and Wicklow. Together both companies have invested more than €2bn in Ireland over the last four decades. For further information visit www.msd.com.

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About the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is an independent member-based organisation committed to making sure people with literacy and numeracy difficulties can fully take part in society and have access to learning opportunities that meet their needs. NALA was established in 1980 and has campaigned since then for the recognition of, and response to, the adult literacy issue in Ireland. It is concerned with developing policy, advocacy, research and offering advisory services in adult literacy work in Ireland. For further information visit www.nala.ie

1 . NALA website. Retrieved 26th February 2010. See <http://www.nala.ie/index.cfm/section/page/ext/MSD/>

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