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Call for Entries to Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards 2011

[Monday 08th November 2010] The MSD/NALA Health Literacy Initiative is delighted to announce the launch of the fourth Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards. Continuing to gain momentum since their inaugural launch in 2007 the awards are designed to recognise and reward excellence in health literacy in the healthcare sector. Health Literacy is increasingly being recognised as an important issue and is a person's ability to understand basic health information, having the knowledge to understand their options and make informed decisions about their own health.

Dr Brendan Clune, General Practitioner and new member of the 2011 judging panel said, "As healthcare professionals working in the healthcare sector we all play an important part in improving health literacy. Take simple steps to encourage your patients to ask questions to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to work with us to take more ownership in the management of their health. I encourage healthcare professionals to visit www.healthliteracy.ie to learn more about health literacy in Ireland and enter as the awards are an opportunity to highlight the work you are doing to improve health communication and share best practice with your colleagues."

Anyone interested in entering the awards is encouraged to visit the awards section on www.healthliteracy.ie. The website provides you with all the information and tools needed to enter the awards such as an entry tips video from Chairperson, Dr Gerardine Doyle, information on what the judges are looking for, the entry format, awards categories, details about the judging panel and how to enter. Entries must be received no later than **12.00 noon on Friday**

28th January 2011 and can be made online or using the downloadable application form on www.healthliteracy.ie.

"It has been very encouraging to see the number and standard of entries increasing year on year since the launch of the Awards in 2007. Innovation was certainly the theme of the 2010 awards such as Staff Midwife, Una O'Brien's creative 'Txt and Twitter' project which used 'teenage texting language' to increased attendance to her antenatal classes by 90%. The judging panel were inspired by projects such as Una's which are having a direct impact on patients and building awareness of the importance of communicating health information more clearly." Commented Ms Ciara O'Rourke, judge and External Affairs Director, MSD.

"Over 50% of Irish adults are affected in some way by literacy difficulties. We all play a role in helping patients understand the array of complex health information and treatment decisions they are faced with. In today's busy environment it is difficult to take the time from our schedules but I encourage you to consider how you can contribute to your patients understanding of the health information you give them." Commented Ms Inez Bailey, Director, National Adult Literacy Agency.

The awards are open to anyone working in the healthcare sector whether you are a receptionist in a GP surgery, a pharmacist, a catering manager in a hospital, a doctor, a nurse or a patient advocate. The Irish Medical Times is once again returning as media partner to the awards. The award categories include:

- A. Best Project in General Practice
- B. Best Project in a Hospital
- C. Best Project in the Community or in a Social Setting
- D. Best Health Promotion Project
- E. Best Health Communication through Journalism

-ENDS-

Notes to Editor

Definition of health literacy

Health literacy involves a person being able to understand basic health information whether they receive it in writing, in person or over the phone. It also involves a person having the knowledge to understand their options and make informed decisions about their own health.

People working in the healthcare sector play an important part in improving health literacy by communicating more clearly and making information and services more accessible to patients.

According to the International Adult Literacy Survey, conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1997, over 50% of Irish adults are affected in some way by literacy difficulties.

About MSD

Today's MSD is a global healthcare leader working to help the world be well. MSD is known as Merck in the United States and Canada and MSD elsewhere. Through our prescription medicines, vaccines, biologic therapies, and consumer care and animal health products, we work with customers and operate in more than 140 countries to deliver innovative health solutions. We also demonstrate our commitment to increasing access to healthcare through far-reaching policies, programs and partnerships. For more information, visit www.msd.ie.

MSD in Ireland

MSD employs 2,300 people directly in Ireland and provides an additional 9,000 indirect jobs through its operations at sites throughout Ireland.

In the last four decades the company has invested over €2.2bn in Ireland. MSD is one of Ireland's leading exporters and contributes significantly towards making the pharmaceutical industry the country's leading export sector. MSD is a member of Guaranteed Irish and manufacturers or packages many of its leading products for the world market in Ireland.

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