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**Press Release**

**For Immediate Release**

**15 early stage start-ups and SME’s named Health Innovation Hub Ireland’s**

**Health Innovations 2020**

**Friday, 10th July 2020** The 2020 winners of Health Innovation Hub Ireland’s call for innovative ideas from companies, start-ups and SMEs has been announced. The national call which involved a nationwide health innovation competition is directed at companies who have an innovative product, solution or service that are at pre-commercial or late development phase with the potential to significantly impact Irish healthcare. The call is particularly relevant this year as the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for innovation in healthcare. In addition, based on HSE input, HIHI also launched a focussed call for the prevention, early diagnosis and self-management of chronic illness including cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease and diabetes. This year there has been a marked surge in companies developing health solutions that reflect global health trends and a particular focus on digital and tele health solutions is emerging.

Forty-eight cutting edge innovators competed for the opportunity to avail of the unique HIHI innovation pathway for companies seeking pilot or validation studies. Acting as a broker HIHI matches companies with relevant clinical teams, oversees a study of each product in an Irish clinical setting, and delivers an outcome report which going forward, supports the adoption of products in national and international markets, enhances distribution opportunities and assists in the continued development for those companies.

HIHI is a joint initiative of the Department of Health and Department of Business Enterprise and Innovation.Our activity is strengthened through the support of Enterprise Ireland and the HSE.  HIHI offers companies the opportunity for pilot studies and provides the health service with access to innovative products, services and devices. Since it was launched in September 2016, HIHI has managed 300 company engagements, 193 of these have resulted in follow-up support activities and 60 of these have developed into active projects within the Irish healthcare system. HIHI also recently triaged almost 200 innovative healthcare solutions through its Covid-19 Innovation Portal. Irish companies are developing innovative healthcare solutions for patients at home and internationally, by supporting these companies through HIHI, we are strengthening our economy while improving patient care.

This year’s final of the HIHI 2020 Health Innovation Competition represented the culmination of a nationwide search to identify up and coming healthcare companies with the potential to scale their business. 23 made it through to our dragon’s den style pitch panels which included experts from HSE, Enterprise Ireland, HRB, SFI, CRCI, Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Department of Health, clinicians, and industry.

There were 15 ultimate winners with strong competition amongst this year’s entries, 5 of these winners address the theme of the focussed call- **‘supporting self-management of chronic illness’.** Many of these solutions leverage technology to enable care in the community, which (in the current pandemic) is now a necessity. HIHI will now match the winning companies with relevant clinical teams, overseeing a study of each product in an Irish clinical setting. These pilot and clinical validation studies provide critical test beds to support Irish companies going to market and can identify any further refinements in the development cycle. Our aim is to ensure that the best Irish healthcare solutions are delivered to patients.

**HIHI 2020 Health Innovators are:**

Stratos Medical – TrackSave In dwelling cannula for Haemodialysis

Lynch’s Pharmacy - DI@DEM –Diabetes Management Service

TIC Ltd – MedChat – “Digital first” communication in healthcare

YellowSchedule – Online scheduling for patient and visitor convenience. Reduces inefficiencies and improves management.

Hygiene Audits- Nursing Home software solution for infection prevention and control management

NUA Surgical - SteriCISION™ - novel intra-operative device to make caesarean sections (C-Sections) a safer, simpler and superior surgery

My Gut Solution Ltd – Digital Therapeutic pathway for irritable bowel syndrome

Feeltect Ltd - TightAlright-a connected-health device for measuring and monitoring sub-bandage pressure.

Bond Platform Ramblegard – Monitors patient activity and falls through use of technology

PacSana- Using comprehensive movement and sensor data to gather and respond to critical care insight.

Diona – Diona provides innovative systems of engagement solutions to government Health and Human Services, Social Care, and Social Security agencies

Wellola – Secure patient-portal solutions sharing of clinical data seamlessly between clinicians and their patients, to increase self-management and support remote care delivery

Bluedrop Medical- Thermovisual monitoring and management of diabetic foot disease.

CardiaCAIR Plexa Medical – PLEXA – Personalising Out Patient Department (OPD) virtual medicine for chronic disease networks

DiOpsy – Mass Spectroscopy Ambient Ionization to differentiate benign and malignant breast tissues core biopsy samples

For further information on the winning companies –

https://hih.ie/engage/health-innovations-2020/

**The Tánaiste, Leo Varadkar said**: *“Irish start-ups are working at the cutting edge of healthcare, coming up with innovative solutions to improve the patient experience and patient outcomes. These successful 15 innovators have been chosen for their use of technology to make it easier for patients to manage chronic conditions, and to help with early diagnosis and prevention. I wish them the very best. The Government will continue to promote and invest in the life sciences sector, for the benefit of our economy and our wellbeing.”*

**Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD,** said *“HIHI has done tremendous work over the last number of years in bringing industry and the health service together to validate innovative products and services.*

*Innovation is essential as we reimagine our health service and implement Sláintecare and I am pleased to see the wide range of ideas put forward, including in the area of digital health, that have been successful in this call.*

*The strength of the Hub is in collaboration and in developing enduring partnerships – both with industry and importantly with the health services - these are key to its success.  I wish all concerned well in the implementation of these ideas.”*

**Chief Executive Officer HSE, Paul Reid** said *“We at the HSE are no strangers to using the latest technology in delivering health services to our patients and service users. We have been using such solutions during the Covid pandemic; for example, services have been working to connect with people using telehealth, providing consultations to patients by phone or on video calls.  Innovation in the health sector enhances outcomes for our patients and makes care delivery easier for our staff, and finding new and exciting ways to address and treat chronic illness in particular benefits us all.  Congratulations to all the entrants, finalists and winners, and thanks to our peers in the Health Innovation Hub Ireland for championing the best of Irish innovation in healthcare.”*

**HIHI National Lead and Principal Investigator, Prof John Higgins congratulated the winners:**

“*These companies are just a flavour of what Ireland is capable of in terms of health innovation talent. Through HIHI we can now connect them with the right people to test their products. At the same time, our health service and clinical teams gain from the use of innovative products that are not available to them in the current system which will benefit patient care overall*.”

***Ends***

**Notes to the Editor:**

**For more information** **or to arrange interviews**: Caroline.mcgarry@ucc.ie, 087 2266062

**For Interview - Dr Tanya Mulcahy, PhD.**, **BSc., PGCert Clin Trials,**

National Manager, Health Innovation Hub Ireland

Winning company interviews available on request.

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**About Health Innovation Hub Ireland**

Health Innovation Hub Ireland (HIHI) is an initiative of the Government of Ireland, through the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Health. HIHI is funded through Enterprise Ireland and supported through the HSE. HIHI works across the health sector with Irish businesses to identify solutions to healthcare problems and improve patient care. Harnessing this innovation, through development and validation of new healthcare technologies, products, and services, will help to create Irish jobs and exports. Operationally HIHI is a partnership of clinical and academic centres from across the country. HIHI works directly with three hospital groups (South/South West, Dublin Midlands and Saolta in the West/North West), the HIHI network can also access all acute and community hospitals, pharmacies, primary care centres and healthcare centres. HIHI is an academic consortium led by UCC with academic partners CIT, TCD and NUI Galway.

The HIHI national team includes HSE assigned staff from pharmacy and physiotherapy to clinical research nurses and biomedical engineers. Team members with both academic and corporate backgrounds further strengthen this mix. The Government group tasked with overseeing HIHI – National Oversight Group, chaired by Mr. Dave Shanahan includes the Department of Health, the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Enterprise Ireland, e health Ireland, HSE, IDA, the Health Research Board and Science Foundation Ireland.

**About Chronic Disease**

The **HSE Integrated Care Programme** for the **Prevention and Management of Chronic Disease**states that ‘approximately 1 million people in Ireland today suffer from Diabetes, Asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) or Cardiovascular disease. The Irish longitudinal study on ageing, TILDA, reports that 64.8% of our over 65 age cohort live with co-morbidity. This is defined as the presence of two or more chronic conditions. The current and projected impact of chronic disease represents a major challenge not just for the health services, but also for Irish society and the Irish economy. We have more people living with chronic disease and multiple co-morbidity, they are living longer with the disease, and while it is good that the range of treatments available is increasing and improving, this also comes at a cost. Unless we plan for these changes now, we are going to run into significant difficulties in ten years' time. In fact, we are facing those difficulties already, as we can see in the 5% to 6% increase in the presentations to our emergency departments year on year and the impact that this is having on our acute hospital system and, in particular, available bed capacity for elective work.

The way we currently provide care for these chronic conditions is relatively ineffective, inefficient and ultimately unsustainable. Too many people end up needing hospital admission due to their chronic disease; which is something that these patients would prefer to avoid. Too many people depend on hospital out-patient services for management of their chronic diseases; which results in delays in appointments for all patients and they may experience gaps in their care as services are stretched.

We need a better way of caring for people with these diseases, and we need to do more to prevent them’.