Press Release

Health Innovation Hub Ireland launches call to business to tackle chronic illness with innovative technologies and solutions

Monday 16ᵗʰ December 2019. Health Innovation Hub Ireland today launched a national call to business to provide innovative solutions for healthcare as well as a specific call for the prevention, early diagnosis, and self-management of chronic illness.

Applications may be submitted to either the **Open Call**, for innovations that address **ANY** healthcare need or the **Focussed Call** for innovations that address a HSE identified priority theme. For December 2019, it centres on **Supporting Self-Management of Chronic Disease including cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease** and **diabetes.**

Dr. Colman Casey, Director of HIHI explained the specifics of the call. *"While the innovations submitted to the HIHI Focussed Call should support the day-to-day self-management for those diagnosed with one (or more) of the identified chronic diseases (cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease and diabetes), it may also include early detection and identification of risk factors and provide options for disease prevention. The solution must demonstrate how it could integrate or work co-operatively with current healthcare supports for chronic illness in Ireland."*

Minister for Health, Simon Harris TD, said *"I welcome the launch of Health Innovation Hub Ireland's third call since 2016. I am happy to see that this call has both an Open Call for innovation in healthcare and also a focussed call that relates to 'Supporting Self-Management of Chronic Disease'. In Ireland approximately 1 million people suffer from Diabetes, Asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) or Cardiovascular disease.*

'I am delighted to see that this call is in line with one of Sláintecare's programmes which focuses on implementing Integrated Care Programmes focused on people with chronic conditions and older people.

There are also many projects around the country which received funding through the €20 million Sláintecare Integration Fund which focus on people with chronic disease and supporting them to engage in chronic disease self-management.

This will also compliment the additional investment of €40m in 2020 in the reformed GP contract to commence the roll out of a structured Chronic Disease Management Programme in

January 2020 targeted at GMS clients aged 75+ with specified chronic disease, focussing on prevention, more treatment in the community and hospital avoidance.'

The work of HIHI has great potential to improve patient experiences and outcomes. I look forward to seeing what innovative ideas and projects come from this call."

Welcoming the call to enterprise **Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation** said: *"As Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation I would strongly encourage enterprises working in this space to respond to HIHI's calls to address healthcare needs.*

Ireland has a wealth of indigenous and international innovative med-tech companies and I would like to see them get involved in this initiative which can benefit both patients and business."

Why Chronic Disease? According to the **WHO**, 'the burden of chronic diseases is rapidly increasing worldwide. It has been calculated that, in 2001, chronic diseases contributed approximately 60% of the 56.5 million total reported deaths in the world and approximately 46% of the global burden of disease. The proportion of the burden of non-communicable disease (NCDs) is expected to increase to 57% by 2020. Almost half of the total chronic disease deaths are attributable to cardiovascular diseases; obesity and diabetes are also showing worrying trends, not only because they already affect a large proportion of the population, but also because they have started to appear earlier in life.'
https://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/2_background/en/

Since it was launched in September 2016, HIHI has managed 265 company engagements, 166 of these have resulted in follow-up support activities and 60 of these have developed into active projects within the Irish healthcare system.

HIHI is a joint initiative of the Department of Health and Department of Business Enterprise and Innovation. As a unique joint government initiative, HIHI offers companies the opportunity for pilot and clinical validation studies and provides the health service with access to innovative products, services, devices. HIHI works to impact Irish business and Irish healthcare in 3 key areas.
1. **Industry:** HIHI matches companies with relevant clinical teams, overseeing a study of each product in an Irish clinical setting.
2. **Healthcare**: HIHI works with healthcare staff to assess ideas that address problems they have encountered in their work. HIHI provides advice and direction on commercialisation and product development and links innovators to the healthcare innovation ecosystem in Ireland.
3. **Education**: Delivering a series of five HIHI workshops and a Diploma
in Healthcare Innovation, HIHI is embedding an innovation culture in Irish healthcare.
HIHI issues an annual call but also welcomes direct engagement through any of its offices in Cork, Dublin and Galway.

Dr. Tanya Mulcahy, National HIHI Manager outlines the application process
"*The HIHI call is open for submissions **until 5pm on Friday January 31ˢᵗ, 2020.***

Companies must submit an application form, available for download on [hih.ie](hih.ie). Short-listed applicants are invited to pitch to an expert HIHI panel. The panel is comprised of subject matter experts along with representatives from Enterprise Ireland, Science Foundation Ireland, Health Research Board and the HSE. For each successful application HIHI oversees a study of each product in an Irish clinical setting and then authors a report upon completion of the study. The completed report can offer leverage for products in international markets, enhance distribution opportunities and inform further development."

Enterprise Ireland Director of Life Sciences, Deirdre Glenn added*: "Ireland's Life Science's sector is continuing to flourish and contribute to the improvements being met across healthcare services and better outcomes for patients.*

"Since it was set-up, the Health Innovation Hub has fostered several innovative healthcare products and services that have gone on to achieve major success. This latest call to businesses to step forward with their technologies and solutions not only benefits patients but is aimed too at helping Irish-based companies to sell their products in new markets overseas.

"We have been so pleased to support the initiative since it was established, and Enterprise Ireland remains focused on supporting companies in the sector that are improving the health of others living with chronic diseases, and in parallel are further elevating Ireland's status as a global leader in healthcare solutions."

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Notes to the Editor:

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

@hihireland   Health-Innovation-Hub_Ireland

About Health Innovation Hub Ireland
Health Innovation Hub Ireland (HIHI) works across the health sector with Irish businesses to creatively solve problems and improve patient care. Harnessing this innovation, through development 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. Academic partners are UCC and CIT, TCD and NUI Galway respectively.

The HIHI national team includes HSE assigned staff from pharmacy 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 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'. https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/cspd/icp/chronic-disease/

The **HSE National Service Plan 2019** states that 'the three most common chronic diseases are cancer, cardiovascular disease and respiratory disease. These diseases give rise to three quarters of deaths in Ireland. It is estimated that over 1.07m people over the age of 18 years currently have one or more chronic diseases (based on analysis of The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA), wave1, 2017 and Quarterly National Household Survey, special module on health, 2010). However, chronic disease increases with age, the highest prevalence observed in the population aged 50 years and over. The number of people in this age cohort, living with one or more chronic disease, is estimated to increase by 40% from 2016 levels, to 1.09m in 2030 (based on analysis of TILDA data, 2018). Multi-morbidity is common in older people with 45.3% of adults aged 65 years and over affected by arthritis, 44.4% by high blood pressure, 11.8% by diabetes and 3.7% by stroke (TILDA wave 3, 2014-2015)'. https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/serviceplans/national-service-plan-2019.pdf

About HIHI Company Case studies
ViClarity

HIHI secured ViClarity its first clinical study in a public Irish hospital. The company has leveraged the study both domestically and internationally when making the ViClarity pitch. It has secured a high-profile client base with healthcare companies such as Mowlam, MHA and most recently the NHS began using its technology solution.

ViClarity has a software tool that monitors compliance with Regulatory Standards. It was originally designed for the Financial Services Industry. In late 2016, ViClarity engaged with HIHI to define a pilot study in the Community Hospital Killarney. The study was driven by their desire to improve on the current manual auditing and compliance measurements within the hospital, overloaded by HIQA standards paperwork.

Based on the HIHI pilot study, the ViClarity system has been procured by the HSE for implementation in 23 community hospitals across Cork and Kerry.

Feeltect

Galway-based wound care company, FeelTect, have developed Tight Alright, a pressure sensing, connected-health device for measuring and monitoring sub-bandage pressure during compression therapy, primarily for the millions of people worldwide with venous leg ulcers (VLUs). Compression is a proven therapy for VLUs, however if it's applied too loose, it's ineffective, and if it's too tight, it's dangerous. Yet studies have shown that it can be extremely difficult for experienced healthcare professionals to achieve a targeted pressure with existing products. As such, Tight Alright aims to improve the application and maintenance of evidence-based therapy, ensuring safety while reducing healing times.

Founder and CEO, Dr Andrew Cameron, engaged HIHI to conduct a user feedback and validation study 'we needed access to end users to demonstrate proof of concept, these studies are essential in developing Tight Alright as a truly wearable product, our aim is to make it the first device capable of continuously monitoring compression therapy outside the clinical setting".