



Press Release

For Immediate Release

HIHI Spark Ignite Innovation Competition launches

Open to the innovative ideas of the 115,000 HSE employees aiming to improve patient and healthcare outcomes

Monday 3rd February 2020. Health Innovation Hub Ireland (HIHI), the Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD), and National Doctor Training and Planning (NDTP) today announced the launch of the second HIHI Spark Ignite Innovation Competition. It is the only staff facing, bottom-up, innovation competition available to the 115,000+ HSE employees. **Spark Ignite is open to all disciplines and departments within the HSE**, enabling staff to validate unmet clinical needs and determine if a market exists for their proposed solution, product, or service. Successful applicants will also receive guidance on commercialisation of their ideas.

Through a continued partnership between the Health Innovation Hub and the National Doctors Training and Planning, with the welcomed addition of the Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director, this initiative recognises the value of healthcare staffs' contribution, experience, and insight in developing solutions within healthcare. HIHI Spark Ignite is an opportunity for **all** healthcare staff to put forward their ideas for innovative products or services. The goal of the HIHI Spark Ignite Competition is assisting staff to develop solutions to the challenges faced by healthcare providers and patients.

Successful applicants will benefit from a bespoke healthcare focused innovation workshop delivered by experts to hone their idea and proceed to pitch for prizes including a €3000 prize for an individual winner, €3,000 team prize and 3 runner up prizes of €1,000. Funding is provided for good ideas but also delivers the training and mentorship required to move those ideas towards reality.

Last year's HIHI Spark Ignite was piloted in the Saolta Hospital Group with phenomenal success. This year's HIHI Spark Ignite will be national and will be open to more staff with more opportunities for people to test their ideas and vie for funding.

A unique opportunity, supported by the commercial and industrial experience of the HIHI team, this programme builds the knowledge and confidence of HSE staff to promote their ideas. A panel of experts from various sectors will review submissions to validate the best ideas. Professional industry/commercial experts provide the training in the workshops. There is potential to bring new products and services to the market that will have a real impact on patient care, healthcare efficiencies, and revenue generation to the exchequer via savings in direct costs as well as sales revenue, export, and employment.

Applications are straight forward, submitted via an [online portal](#) to HHI. The call will open on 3rd February 2020 and will close on 13th March 2020. Apply now to www.hih.ie.

Dr Steven Griffin, Innovation from Healthcare Lead, HHI, outlines the value of the programme. *“This unique programme not only provides seed funding to develop good ideas assessed by a panel of experts but gives the participants the opportunity to learn about the innovation process. It will afford HSE staff the opportunity to learn the skills required to identify and develop good ideas as well as understanding how to frame that idea to gather support from all stakeholders including peers, management, and funders. The value of the programme is in the fact that previous participants have become champions of innovation.”*

Dr Ciara Carroll, National Fellow for Innovation and Change said: *“Spark Ignite is a fantastic initiative that supports entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship in HSE staff. I look forward to seeing the creative solutions developed as staff benefit from the workshops, mentorship and other supports offered by the programme.”*

Ends

Notes to the Editor:

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About the Health Innovation Hub Ireland

Health Innovation Hub Ireland (HHI) 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 HHI is a partnership of clinical and academic centres from across the country. HHI works directly with three hospital groups (South/South West, Dublin Midlands and Saolta in the West/North West), the HHI 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 [HHI 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 HHI – 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 the NDTP

National Doctors Training and Planning (NDTP) is the branch of the HSE that oversees medical education and training, medical workforce planning and the appointment of consultants. NDTP has been responsible for a number of innovative solutions to workforce issues including the introduction of the national NCHD Employment Record, creation of the Lead NCHD programme and the Doctors

Integrate Management E-System. NDTP established the Spark Innovation Programme in July 2017 to empower doctors and promote a culture where innovation is valued and supported within the HSE.

About the ONMSD

The Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD) works to strategically lead and support nurses and midwives to deliver safe, high-quality, person-centred care. ONMSD enables nursing and midwifery staff by strengthening capability within the workforce, supporting service reform and influencing policy. Creating an environment where innovation and creativity is fostered is an important facet of ONMSD's work and is supported through a number of offerings including the Service Improvement Innovation initiative and a partnership with the Spark Innovation Programme.