

Statement by the Medical and Allied Professional Community in Ireland on the occasion of the Adoption and Signing of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control at the World Health Assembly.

Dr Desmond A. Canavan
President (RCPI)

Dr P. Anthony Carney
Dean of Faculty of Medicine &
Health Sciences (NUI, Galway)

Dr John F. Cosgrove
Dean of Faculty of Paediatrics
(RCPI)

Dr Peter Cowan
Dean of Faculty of Dentistry
(RCSI)

Nora J. Cummins
Dean of Faculty of Nursing
& Midwifery (RCSI)

Prof. Muiris X. FitzGerald
Dean of Faculty of Medicine
(UCD)

Dr Jack Gallagher
Dean of Institute of Obstetrics &
Gynaecology (RCPI)

Dr Fenton Howell
Dean of Faculty of Public
Health Medicine (RCPI)

Prof. Alan H. Johnson
Dean of Medical Faculty (RCSI)

Dr John Malone
Dean of Faculty of
Occupational Medicine (RCPI)

Dr David McNerney
Dean of Faculty of Radiologists
(RCSI)

Dr T. Joseph McKenna
Registrar (RCPI)

Dr Deirdre Murphy
President (ICGP)

Prof. Michael B. Murphy
Dean of Faculty of Medicine &
Health (UCC)

Dr D. Sean O'Briain
Dean of Faculty of Pathology
(RCPI)

Prof. Diarmuid B. Shanley
Dean of Faculty of Health
Sciences (TCD)

Prof. Malcolm B. Smyth
Dean of Faculty of Science
& Health (DCU)

Prof. Oscar Traynor
Dean of Postgraduate Surgical
Studies (RCSI)

Non-smokers live longer and feel healthier.

I wish to join with other representatives of the Irish Universities' Faculties of Medicine and Allied Professions, and the Colleges of Physicians, Surgeons, and General Practitioners in Ireland in welcoming the adoption and signing of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control at the World Health Assembly.

Tobacco smoke is the leading preventable cause of death and disability in Ireland. Medical evidence has repeatedly confirmed tobacco as a cause of cardiovascular disease (including heart attack and stroke), common cancers, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthmatic attacks, low birth weight babies and sudden infant death syndrome. Nicotine, the pharmacologically active ingredient in tobacco, is a highly addictive substance which greatly diminishes smokers' freedom of choice.

In addition to its direct effect on smokers, tobacco also affects non-smokers through exposure to environmental tobacco smoke particularly in confined spaces such as bars, restaurants, and other workplaces. Smoking in the home damages the health of spouses and children. We welcome the designation of tobacco smoke as a carcinogen by the World Health Organisation.

Given the overwhelming medical evidence of the harm caused by tobacco and of its addictive nature, we support legislation which strictly regulates the sale of tobacco, which prohibits its promotion through advertising and other means, and which vindicates peoples' right to smoke-free public places, especially workplaces including bars and restaurants. We also recognise that increasing the price of tobacco products is an effective means of reducing consumption, particularly among children and adolescents. Only by adopting and implementing these essential measures will the enormous burden of tobacco related disease and death be significantly alleviated.