

## Press Release

### Neurology Leads the Way for Innovation in Healthcare in Ireland March 8<sup>th</sup> 2010

As part of events for National Brain Awareness Week (March 8<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>), the Neurological Alliance of Ireland will announce the winner of its inaugural **Innovation Award 2010** on March 9<sup>th</sup> at a special one day conference in Dublin looking at the future of neurological services in Ireland.

The Neurological Alliance of Ireland (NAI) Innovation Award is a new initiative aimed at highlighting and recognising the pioneering work being done by hospitals, charities and other healthcare professionals in providing services to over 700,000 people in Ireland affected by neurological conditions.

*“The fact that we received almost 30 applications for the award shows that despite the climate of health sector cutbacks, committed people continue to work hard to develop solutions to the many challenges facing our neurological services”,* says Anne Winslow, Chair of NAI and CEO of the MS Society of Ireland.

*“The creativity and high standard displayed by all the applications is hugely impressive. We know that neurology has been a leader in healthcare innovation in Ireland - the entries clearly demonstrate this”.*

Entries were received from a wide range of applicants including NAI member organisations, hospitals, universities and research groups and other agencies. The four entries shortlisted for the award indicate the variety and range of service innovation currently underway.

- [www.try-it.ie](http://www.try-it.ie) provides a novel and cost effective way of enabling people with neurological conditions to try out state of the art technologies through an on-line library. A number of agencies have come together to establish the website to increase awareness of and access to technologies which can assist people in remaining independent and enhance their quality of life.
- The **Beaumont Hospital Epilepsy Programme** has developed an innovative solution to the problem of keeping track of all the information relating to the ongoing treatment of a complex neurological condition such as epilepsy. Through the development of an electronic patient record, many aspects of patient care are improved, allowing rapid access to information about their needs and enhanced communication among hospital staff.
- The **Headway Bridging Programme** facilitates people with acquired brain injuries to develop the skills and strategies to access mainstream work or training. In an outstanding example of collaborative working, the project delivers an individually tailored prevocational and work placement

programme to a group of people who often struggle to return to employment because of a range of disabling physical, intellectual and behavioural changes as a result of their injury.

- The **Epilepsy Service in St James's Hospital** set out to transform epilepsy services in their catchment area by developing a programme aimed at reducing admissions and length of stay and improving access to services for people with epilepsy. Their care pathway from prevention and managed primary care all the way to specialist intervention can act as a template for the transformation of epilepsy services nationally.

The winning entry will be announced at the NAI's conference "*The Future for Neurological Conditions*" in the Science Gallery, Trinity College Dublin on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March. The winning entry will receive a €2,000 grant to help continue and develop their existing work. Enda Connolly, CEO of the Health Research Board will present the award.

The Neurological Alliance of Ireland is an umbrella group representing neurological charities and is the organiser of Brain Awareness Week in Ireland. For more information on the National Brain Awareness Week and the Neurological Alliance of Ireland, see the NAI website at [www.nai.ie](http://www.nai.ie) or phone 01 8724120

The NAI innovation award is sponsored by Medtronic Ireland.