

# PRESS RELEASE

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## IRISH HOSPICE FOUNDATION OUTLINES NEED FOR NEW HOSPICE DEVELOPMENTS

### - STATEMENT ISSUED ON EVE OF WORLD HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE DAY 2006 -

On the eve of World Hospice and Palliative Care Day 2006, the Irish Hospice Foundation (IHF) has urged the Government to fulfil its pledge to significantly invest in hospice care in Ireland to ensure equal access to quality end-of-life services for all citizens.

World Hospice and Palliative Care Day takes place worldwide on Saturday, October 7<sup>th</sup>. It is a day of unified action to support and celebrate hospice and palliative care around the world. This is the second year that World Hospice and Palliative Care Day has taken place.

The theme of World Hospice and Palliative Care Day this year is *Access to Care for All*. Bono, Elton John and Archbishop Desmond Tutu have expressed their support for the day. In his message of support, Bono stated: *"In the poorest countries, where so many people are fighting for their lives, the conditions of death don't get much of a look in. But how we care for the sick and dying is surely a litmus test of our humanity. Just as we fight for equality in life, we should fight for equality in death."*

Chief Executive Officer of the Irish Hospice Foundation, Mr Eugene Murray, stated: *"More than one million people worldwide die each week. Only a minority of dying people ever receive the support of hospice and palliative care services. In fact it is estimated that 100 million people worldwide could benefit from basic hospice or palliative care every year – 33 million people dying and their 66 million family members and loved ones."*

He continued: *"This is not just a problem for resource-poor countries around the world. Citizens in developed countries such as Ireland also face barriers in accessing quality end-of-life care. We know that there are significant deficits in staff and hospice beds in Ireland. It is not acceptable that your ability to access hospice care depends on which part of the country you live in and your diagnosis."*

More than 6,000 Irish people use hospice care services each year but a report entitled, *A Baseline Study on the Provision of Hospice/Specialist Palliative Care Services in Ireland*, released last March, revealed continued inconsistency and inequities in accessing hospice services throughout the country.

The Foundation has made a submission to the new National Development Plan (NDP) outlining the need for €146.7 million over the coming five years or €29.3 million each year in extra capital spending on hospice/palliative care services. **The Foundation is specifically seeking €96.7 million over the coming five years or €19.3 million each in extra capital spending on 193 additional specialist hospice beds.**

The current NDP expires at the end of this year and the new Plan will cover the seven year period from 2007 to 2013.

In its submission to the NDP, the Foundation outlined the capital needs of hospice/palliative care services (2006-2011):

- Setting up three hospices units (Waterford, Tullamore, Drogheda) with a total of 98 beds in three former health board areas (the North East, the South East and the Midlands) would come to €78 million;
- Providing an additional 20 beds in two existing in-patients units (Galway and Blackrock) would cost €12.5 million;
- Creating satellite in-patient units with a total of 75 beds in Kerry, Blanchardstown, Wicklow, Mayo, and Kildare would cost €55 million;
- Improving day care and home care services would cost €10 million per annum;
- Investment in acute hospitals would cost €6 million per annum;
- Improvements in community hospitals would amount to €10 million per annum.

Mr Murray concluded: *“The proposed annual expenditure of €45.3 million over five years on facilities for care of the dying is a tiny fraction of the Government’s €6 billion annual capital programme. The Government has committed to prioritise the development of hospice services under the recently agreed Social Partnership Agreement and the National Cancer Strategy. The Irish Hospice Foundation hopes that these positive policy aspirations are matched by the resource allocation within the new National Development Plan.”*

The Irish Hospice Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation which was set up in 1986 to support hospice services and promote the hospice philosophy.

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**Note to editor**

The Irish Hospice Foundation’s submission to the National Development Plan is posted on the Foundation’s website on [www.hospice-foundation.ie](http://www.hospice-foundation.ie). To learn more about World Hospice and Palliative Care Day, you can log on to [www.worldday.org](http://www.worldday.org).