

Message from the Directors

As the Ireland-Northern Ireland-National Cancer Institute Cancer Consortium looks toward its fifth year in existence, we take pride in our many achievements. Working together in this unique effort since 1999, the governments of the United States, Ireland, and Northern Ireland have exhibited extraordinary support to the Consortium, leading to the expansion of cancer services across the island of Ireland. Yet we know that there is still much to be done. Our goal to provide world-class cancer care to the people on the island of Ireland remains the focus of all of our Consortium activities and so the Consortium moves forward with clear deliberation and spirit.

Below are some highlights of the outcomes of 2003:


- Consortium members continued to work with island of Ireland cancer professionals to expand initiatives in nursing, scholar exchange, cancer prevention, clinical trials, information technology sharing, and cancer registry collaboration. (See pages 14-21.)
- Forty-one island of Ireland health professionals traveled to the United States to attend cancer prevention or clinical trials training at the National Cancer Institute (NCI), including Dr Deirdre Cronin, a molecular biologist, who was awarded a two-year epidemiology fellowship at NCI. (See pages 22-29.)
- Mr Joseph Campo, the first US researcher awarded a research grant on the island of Ireland under the auspices of the Consortium, worked with the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry (NICR) and the National Cancer Registry of Ireland (NCRI) to write and publish the *All Ireland Cancer Statistics Second Report 1998-2000*—a profile of cancer incidence, mortality and survival for the island of Ireland, 1998-2000. (See page 14.)
- A two-day prevention workshop on smoking cessation was held for the first time in Dundalk, Ireland, to identify areas of need for future cancer research and collaborations. (See page 20.)
- The TELESYNERGY® User Group held its first meeting at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to discuss new technological capabilities and enhancing cancer informatics infrastructure on Ireland, North and South. (See page 18.)
- The Irish Department of Health and Children, with additional support from NCI and the Northern Ireland Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, funded the highly successful second All-Ireland Cancer Conference in Cork, Ireland. (See page 41.)
- The first All-Island Cancer Clinical Trials Cooperative Group was formally launched in Dublin and Belfast, Northern Ireland. The Irish Oncology Research Group (Dublin) and the Clinical Research Support Centre (Belfast) provided data and statistical management for a “network” of cancer centres that will enable patients in Ireland, North and South, to participate in high quality clinical trials. (See page 17.)

At the end of 2003, the Consortium lost an invaluable asset when Maria Stamos left NCI. From the early days of the Consortium, Maria was a driving force, totally committed to the flawless orchestration of the Consortium’s day-to-day business. Her meticulous management and administrative skills combined with consummate professionalism ensured a smoothly functioning organisation. We extend our thanks for her years of dedicated service.

2003 was a year during which we again experienced the uncertainties of terrorism, war, and unrest throughout the world. Despite these worries, we have managed to maintain strong partnerships between Northern Ireland, Ireland, and NCI to ensure that our global fight against cancer moves forward. By strengthening our ongoing programmes and implementing new ones, we hope to further deepen our connections and expand our horizons beyond what was once an idea on paper.



Dr James Kiely
Chief Medical Officer
Department of Health and Children
Ireland



Dr Henrietta Campbell
Chief Medical Officer
Department of Health,
Social Services and Public Safety
Northern Ireland



Dr Andrew von Eschenbach
Director
National Cancer Institute
United States