

newsletter

Welcome

to the 16th RESIST newsletter from the Antimicrobial Resistance and Infection Control Division of HPSC (AMRIC). In this edition we highlight the AMS conference, EAAD and new AMRIC resources. We also have lots of updates on antimicrobial resistance, IPC news and a look at some of the many RESIST launches in community services.

Thanks for your comments and inputs, if you have any suggestions on content or want further information please contact us on

hcai.amrteam@hse.ie

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Dr. Colm Henry, HSE Chief Clinical Officer

I want to thank everyone for their continued hard work during this recent exceptionally busy time in the health services. We have had an unprecedented combination of very high levels of flu, COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses circulating in the community. This has had a very significant impact on our hospitals, GPs, national ambulance service and community services. While this surge of winter virus infections was predicted and planned for, the trends followed the more pessimistic of predicted models, and that happened earlier and to a greater extent than had been hoped.

During January we had days where there were over 1500 people admitted with respiratory illnesses. This meant we had reduced capacity in our hospitals, with delays in admitting people while you were working in very challenging environments. It has been very difficult for all staff working on the frontline who are distressed that patients have not been able to access the levels of care and comfort that we would always want to provide to them. We have seen a continuing downward trend of flu, RSV and COVID-19 infections but we continue to be busy.

Our aim is to support our staff and work with all stakeholders in order to protect patient safety and minimise negative impacts on patient experience. We want to be able to look back and say that everything that could be done was done.

Many of our staff are also affected by COVID-19, flu and viral illnesses. Even though vaccines take two weeks to work, it's still not too late for people to get their flu vaccine, or their COVID-19 booster, if they are due. Keeping up to date with vaccines is an effective, safe way to protect you and people around you from flu or COVID-19.

Continued overleaf



Dr. Colm Henry, HSE Chief Clinical Officer



Dr. Colm Henry, HSE Chief Clinical Officer (continued)



Please remember that the vaccine is excellent at protecting people but no vaccine is perfect, so even after you are fully vaccinated you need to keep your guard up. We're still seeing unvaccinated individuals disproportionately represented in both hospitalised and ICU patients where 35% of hospitalised patients have not completed their primary course and 37% of the relatively small number in ICU have not completed their primary course of vaccination.

In addition, we are maintaining vigilance for newer viral variants that may have different, perhaps more harmful effects on our health. Vaccination with the most recent vaccine for which you are eligible is likely to remain central to keeping you and those around you as prepared as possible.

The good work you all do with infection prevention and control precautions help to

keep everybody safe. Please ensure that you are up to date with the most recent version of the relevant guidance for your services.

We are working to deliver the long-term plan of Sláintecare including more beds in addition to the 1000 beds introduced during the pandemic. Many services have already introduced integrated care. In 2023 we are focussing on the medium to long-term implementation of Sláintecare to continue to change the way to deliver care.

Thank you for your continued commitment to providing services to the people that need our help and support.

Míle buíochas d'achan dhuine GRMA

Dr Colm Henry Chief Clinical Officer

Marking International Infection Control Day

CHO3 IPC Community Team facilitating a refresher day for IPC Link Practitioner Session as part of Infection Prevention & Control week, on Oct. 18th.

Photo (left to right): Mary O'Dwyer - IPC CNS, Callum Ryan – Antimicrobial Pharmacist, Trudy Ryan - IPC CNM2, Olivia Kirwan – Grade IV, Geraldine Crowley – IPC CNS.





Antibiotics are a precious resource



Antibiotics have been in the news in recent times due to increased demands on supplies during the last few months. For the vast majority of us most of the time we can manage the common symptoms of a viral infection by ourselves, easing the worst of the symptoms while our own immune system kicks in and the virus runs its course. Learning how to manage common illnesses with confidence and common sense is a great life skill and improves our understanding of when we need antibiotics and when we don't.

www.undertheweather.ie is a HSE website that gives practical, common-sense advice and information on dealing with many common illnesses like colds, flu, earaches, sore throats, tummy bugs and rashes. Last year more than 800,000 visitors went online to get advice on the many different illnesses listed on undertheweather.ie I would encourage you all to become familiar with the site and to promote it to service users and your family and friends.

Having lived through the recent years of the COVID19 pandemic we have all learnt a lot more about viral illness and how we can protect and treat ourselves. What we really need to do now is to continue to reinforce the message that we can usually manage the symptoms of viral infections ourselves without looking for an antibiotic. Most people are aware that antibiotics don't work for viral illnesses and we saw a reduction in antibiotic use during COVID-19. However, antibiotic use is going up again recently and they just do not have any effect on viral illnesses.

The website also highlights the need to change our culture around antibiotics; we need to ensure that we reserve antibiotics for those cases where they are really needed – that is for bacterial infections. Part of the change in culture is using www.undertheweather.ie. If we all understand that we can usually get better ourselves without an antibiotic, that's better for everybody."

Antibiotics are a precious resource. There are only a fairly small number of antibiotics so if we don't want to run out of antibiotics that we can use then they must be managed sustainably. It's in all our best interests to protect antibiotics. Over use prescribing and incorrect use of antibiotics is taking a toll on their effectiveness. Already, every year some people's lives are shortened from bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics and people are dying before they need to because the antibiotics we have don't work.

You can read about the steps being taken to maximise effective and appropriate use of antibiotics on page 11. Updates on antibiotic supplies are available on www.antibioticprescribing.ie



Dr. Eimear Brannigan, HSE Clinical Lead for antimicrobial resistance and infection control



New online education modules launched



Our team continues to develop further IP&C and AMR courses for all healthcare staff as part of the HSE AMRIC action plan 2022-2025. New courses support best practice in healthcare and are aligned with the HSE Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance which is hosted on the www.hpsc.ie. These online courses are available for all healthcare staff who work to provide

healthcare to the people we serve and use our services.

These highly interactive courses available on www.hseland.ie are designed using international best practice in learning design and support the performance development of multidisciplinary staff throughout the services across multiple settings. We encourage you to use these educational resource's which are available on www.hseland.ie

The table below outlines the course content, audience, duration of each course and relevant accreditation.



| Course Name | Staff group | Duration and accreditation | Brief description |
|--|--|--|--|
| AMRIC Antimicrobial resistance and multi drug resistant organisms | All healthcare workers in the acute and community setting | 45 Minutes 1 CEU from NMBI 2 CPD credits from RCPI. | AMR and MDROs, how bacteria become resistant to antibiotics. The different types of multi drug resistant organisms and the impact of AMR and MDROs. - Preventing and controlling AMR and MDROs, including engaging in antimicrobial stewardship, the application of standard and transmission based precautions, surveillance |
| AMRIC Healthcare- Associated Infections (HCAI): An Overview for Managers | All Healthcare managers in acute and community healthcare settings. | 20 minutes CEU from NMBI 2 CPD credits from RCPI | Infection prevention and control and healthcare associated infections The managers role in healthcare associated infection management Infection prevention and control strategies |
| AMRIC Outbreak – Prevention and Management | All healthcare workers in the acute and community setting. | 30 minutes 1 CEU from NMBI 2 CPD credits from RCPI | Introducing outbreak management Investigating and managing an outbreak |

The HSE AMRIC 2023 eLearning programme of work is currently being finalised and we look forward to updating older courses and developing new courses for staff into the future.



Accessing AMRIC print resources and patient information



There are a number of AMRIC print resources available to order including awareness posters, guidance posters and patient information leaflets. These resources are available to order online from www.healthpromotion.ie. To place an order you should first set up a professional account when registering. To access the AMRIC resources you should type RESIST into the search box. This will bring up the 27 items that are currently available to health professionals to order.

The printed patient information leaflets include the following:

| СРЕ | C. Diff | VRE |
|--|--|----------------------|
| MRSA | ESBL | IV lines |
| How to take your antibiotics | Norovirus | Urinary catheters |
| Infection prevention in hospital | Multiple Drug Resistant Organisms (MDROs) | |

We have also provided translations of all of these leaflets in French, Irish, Polish, Russian, Spanish and Ukrainian. The fact sheets are available to download and print here Please note that in some translations you will need to open on the link to identify the content. It will be shown in the title line at above the document.

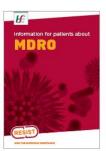
RESIST merchandise (t-shirts, note books, bags etc) is reserved for hand hygiene day, European Antibiotic Awareness Day and RESIST launches. Merchandise will continue to be issued via the AMRIC team and are not available to order online. If you have any queries please contact the AMRIC team hcai.amrteam@hse.ie





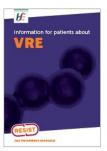




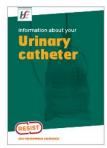


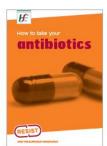
















HSE AMRIC antimicrobial stewardship workshop



The HSE AMRIC team hosted a full day workshop on the HSE antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) <u>guidance</u> for all healthcare settings on the 15th of November 2022 in the Morrison Hotel, Dublin.

One of the major recommendations of the AMS guidance is that everyone working in health services has a role to play as an antimicrobial steward. In line with this, the workshop brought together 130 healthcare workers from across multiple disciplines and settings. On the day doctors, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, healthcare managers and patient representatives explored how they can play their part, or further their contributions, in delivering AMS.

Resources relating to the event are now available on the <u>AMS page</u> on antibioticprescribing.ie (scroll down the page and located under 'AMS resources for all healthcare professionals' > 'General AMS resources') and include:

- AMRIC AMS event and workshop agenda and presentation slides
- AMRIC AMS Workshop reducing unnecessary antibiotic use (summary of workshop outputs broken down by setting)

- AMRIC AMS Workshop local governance, structures and supports (summary of poll results)
- List of AMRIC AMS modules available to all healthcare workers on HSELAND – this may be a useful resource in supporting AMS education in your setting
- List of AMRIC communications resources available including both those available to order and online resources (posters, leaflets, video content)

These resources will help inform local antimicrobial stewardship across all settings and to support implementation of the HSE antimicrobial stewardship guidance for all healthcare settings.

The outputs of the morning and afternoon workshop sessions provide useful ideas on where we can focus, both locally and nationally, to support a reduction in unnecessary antibiotic use and to support local AMS governance and structures.

These actions are essential to ensure that we tackle the growing trend of antimicrobial resistance to ensure we have effective antimicrobials, now and in the future, to enable us to deliver healthcare.





Participants working through the challenges of AMR



National Patient Safety Office Conference



The National Patient Safety Office (NPSO) Conference 2022 returned in October last, following a 2-year hiatus owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to this, the conference had been an annual event run by the NPSO since it was established in the Department of Health in December 2016.

This year's theme was "Working Together for Patient Safety" and the speakers explored collaboration for patient safety and how people are drivers of change. Six hundred delegates registered to attend the event which was held in the Printworks in Dublin Castle. The conference was chaired by the Chief Nursing Officer, Rachel Kenna and the day was brought to a close by the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, T. D. The Chief Medical Officer, Prof. Breda Smyth and the HSE Chief Clinical Officer, Dr. Colm Henry chaired sessions throughout the day.

The morning keynote speaker, Professor Suzette Woodward, a former paediatric intensive care nurse, spoke about perspectives on Safety II. The afternoon keynote speaker, Professor Eilish McAuliffe has a background in Clinical Psychology and is the Director of the UCD Centre for Interdisciplinary Research, Education and Innovation in Health Systems, and spoke about how to assess and cultivate Psychological Safety in healthcare teams.

For the first time, the QPS Talktime webinar was hosted live from Dublin Castle. In addition to a broad variety of speakers, a "Pearls of Change" session, the programme included two workshops covering evidence synthesis and patient safety.

There were two poster competitions, including the inaugural Students and Graduates Of the Last Decade ("GOLD") competition for research on Antimicrobial Resistance and Infection Prevention and Control. Organisations, including from the HSE, HIQA and Patients for Patient Safety showcased their work at the conference stands.

Planning is underway for the 2023 Conference in October and the NPSO will issue details when confirmed.



Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, T.D. and the Chief Nursing Officer, Rachel Kenna



Dr Eimear Brannigan, Clinical Lead of HSE AMRIC speaking at the NPSO Conference 2022



Updated standard precautions poster



The AMRIC nursing team has developed an updated standard precautions poster (pictured on the next page). This is to ensure that recommendations align to the new draft NCEC infection prevention and control guidelines. Any IPC strategy should be based on the use of Standard Precautions as a minimum level of control. Standard precautions are used at all times to minimise the risk of transmission of infectious microorganisms.

It is essential that standard precautions are applied at all times. The poster uses graphics to demonstrate the key elements of standard precautions and act as a reminder of good practice. In addition to the poster the AMRIC Nursing team has developed an explainer and that is available here.

It is important to refer to additional resources to further support knowledge and understanding of each element of standard precautions including accredited AMRIC Infection prevention and control training and education resources on HSELand

These courses can be accessed online and completed at the users ease.

Additional details and further information is available in the draft NCEC guidelines and can be accessed <u>here</u>.

The poster along with the recently updated safe use of gloves poster has recently been distributed to IPC leads in all acute and CHO services.

Additional copies of both posters are available to order on www.healthpromotion.ie To order larger quantities please register as a professional user on the site.

IPC and AMS workshop held in Navan

The Infection Prevention & Control and Antimicrobial Stewardship Team welcomed Infection Prevention & Control Link Practitioners (IPCLP) to the 2nd Workshop of 2022 on the 18th October 2022 in Navan. It was great to see the IPCLPs attend the workshop, which focused on topics for winter preparedness and treatment for respiratory viruses and practices around sharp management. The team were delighted to welcome Gwen Regan, *Director of Nursing Infection Prevention and Control/Community Healthcare - Quality & Patient Safety*, to the workshop to provide an overview of the IPC Link Practitioner programme and participated in our panel of questions and answers session during the day.

Thank you to all the Infection Prevention & Control Link Practitioners for their engagement in the IPC/AMS Workshop and their work within their facilities.









Standard precautions

Hand hygiene



to reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms

Personal protective equipment (PPE)



PPE as appropriate based on a point of care risk assessment (PCRA): to prevent exposure to infectious microorganisms

Safe handling and disposal of sharps



assist in preventing transmission of blood borne virus

Environmental controls (cleaning and spills management)



to assist in preventing transmission of microorganisms from the environment to people who use healthcare services and healthcare workers

Single use equipment and appropriate reprocessing of reusable equipment and instruments



to prevent person to person transmission of microorganisms

Practising respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette



reduces the risk of transmission of infectious microorganisms spread by droplets and aerosols

Aseptic technique



to prevent microorganisms on hands, surfaces or equipment from being introduced into a susceptible site

Appropriate handling and disposal of waste and linen



assists in reducing transmission of microorganisms









New epidemiologist appointed



Sarah Egan joined the HSE Antimicrobial Resistance and Infection Prevention and Control team as an epidemiologist in November 2022. Sarah completed her PhD in Trinity College Dublin, where her research focused on the epidemiology of vancomycin-resistant and linezolid-resistant enterococci (VRE & LRE) in Ireland using large whole-genome sequencing datasets corresponding metadata, resulting in international peer-reviewed publications. As part of the AMRIC team she will be supporting the use of epidemiological methods to help the team and the HSE understand and manage the challenges of antimicrobial resistance and healthcare associated infection.

Sarah has previous experience working as a Medical Scientist in Microbiology laboratories in Ireland, where she has worked as a member of the hospital IPC team, responsible for routine processing of microbiological samples and the improvement of test methodologies.

Sarah also works as a part-time assistant lecturer in Technological University Dublin, teaching

microbiology at both undergrad and masters' level and also advising students on projects in the areas of data analysis and report writing.

"I am very excited to join the AMRIC team at a time where public health and infection control is at the forefront of our health service. I hope my broad experience and interest in antimicrobial resistance, from both a research and a routine laboratory perspective, can contribute positively to the work being done in AMRIC.

I am looking forward to working with my AMRIC colleagues through the challenges ahead to reduce the burden of antimicrobial resistance and healthcare infection". You can contact Sarah by email sarah.egan5@hse.ie



Meeting AMR future leaders

The HSE AMRIC team sponsored an antimicrobial resistance (AMR) project as part of the AMR partnership with Atlantic Technological University (ATU). The partnership has been in place for a number of years and is aimed at raising awareness around antimicrobial overuse and what steps we can take to reduce use. As part of European Antibiotic Awareness Day the university held a number of awareness events including lectures, advertising and a poster competition.



The competition asked students to focus on key AMR messaging that would appeal to students. The winners were selected and a presentation was made in December. Congratulations to the winner 1st year Medical Science student, Shane Dirrane and the runner-up 1st year Medical Science student, Sarah Thomas.

At the presentation to the winners were I-r Shane Dirrane, Audrey Lambourn, AMRIC team, Sarah Thomas, Dr Sheila Faherty, Lecturer Atlantic Technological University and Debbie Corcoran

Lecturer, Atlantic Technological University



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Get better without antibiotics

For the vast majority of us most of the time we can manage the common symptoms of a virus infection by ourselves, easing the worst of them while our own immune system kicks in and the virus runs its course.

<u>www.undertheweather.ie</u> is a HSE website that gives practical, common-sense advice and information on dealing with many common illnesses like colds, flu, earaches, sore throats, tummy bugs and rashes. Last year more than 800,000 visitors went online to get advice on the many different illnesses listed on undertheweather.ie

Many infections are caused by viruses, for example 98 per cent of sinus infections are caused by viruses. Having lived through a pandemic we have all learnt a lot more about viral illness and how we can protect and treat ourselves. Most people are aware that antibiotics don't work for viral illnesses and we saw a reduction in antibiotic use during COVID-19. However antibiotic use is going up recently and they just do not work for viral illnesses including flu, colds, RSV etc.

Some people still believe antibiotics can help them to get better from common illnesses like tummy bugs, rashes, coughs etc. In fact, antibiotics are useless against most of these infections because they are mainly caused by viruses and antibiotics just don't work on viruses. Antibiotics are powerful drugs that that can help us to survive a dangerous infection by killing the bacteria that make us sick.

But using antibiotics comes with a cost. The cost is side effects as they also kill off a lot of our good bacteria. This means that other less friendly bacteria and fungi can get a foothold and grow. This is why antibiotics can cause nausea, diarrhoea and thrush. Antibiotics can also interact with other drugs and can cause skin rashes and some of them upset the rhythm of the heart and brain. When we really need an antibiotic we have to accept the side effects risk but taking antibiotics we don't need is likely to do us more harm than good. If you do need an antibiotic it is best to take the course as prescribed and if you feel that they are not helping you or they are upsetting your system check with your doctor before you stop. Never share leftover antibiotics or take them without medical supervision.

Antibiotics are a precious resource. There are only a fairly small number of antibiotics so if we don't want to run out of antibiotics that we can use then they must be managed sustainably. It's in all our best interests to protect antibiotics.

Over prescribing and incorrect use of antibiotics is taking a toll on their effectiveness. Already, every year some people's lives are shortened from bugs that are resistant to antibiotics and people are dying before they need to because the antibiotics we have don't work.

Antibiotics should only be taken when absolutely necessary. They can cause harm and can have serious side effects for adults and children: Rash Loss of appetite Nausea Diarrhoea Thrush Can cause superbugs If your doctor says you don't need an antibiotic, that's ok. Many common illnesses don't require an antibiotic, your body will be able to fight the infection on its own.



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National Antimicrobial Point Prevalence Survey of Acute Hospitals 2022

Conducted by antimicrobial pharmacists and multidisciplinary antimicrobial stewardship teams in the acute hospitals across Ireland.

in 53 Hospitals

KEY FINDINGS

1. Prevalence of antimicrobials



2. WHO AWaRe antibiotic classification



48% Access antibiotics

safer, likely to be effective.

less risk of causing AMR

and C. diff





greater risk of causing AMR, C. diff and side effects

3% Reserve antibiotics last line antibiotics used to treat multi-drug resistant infections

4. Surgical antibiotic prophylaxis duration



For approximately 1 In 3 patients who received surgical antimicrobial prophylaxis the duration extended beyond 24 hours. Most procedures only regulre a single dose.

5. Antimicrobial prescription duration

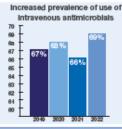
of antimicrobial prescriptions had a planned review or duration documented

of antimicrobial prescriptions were 26% considered to be of appropriate duration

6. Compliance with guidelines

of antimicrobial prescriptions were in line with local guidelines or micro/ID approved

3. Intravenous versus oral antimicrobial therapy



Prevalence of intravenous use of antimicrobials that have almost 100% oral absorption when given by mouth:











Levofloxacin

Most patients on these antimicrobials should receive oral therapy from the outset.

RECOMMENDATIONS





Use Access antibiotics where appropriate as per WHO AWaRe classification





oral route for niorobials with excellent oral absorption in line with HSE AMPIC Antimicrobial Stewardship Guidance for all Healthcare Settings





paper.

Since 2009 the annual national antimicrobial point prevalence survey (PPS) has been completed in acute hospitals in Ireland. The 2022 national PPS had the highest number of participants to date and all participants are commended for contributing to this important national antimicrobial stewardship work.

The survey is conducted by antimicrobial pharmacists and multidisciplinary antimicrobial stewardship teams in the acute hospitals across Ireland. The 2022 PPS was coordinated and analysed by the HSE-AMRIC team.

Key findings and recommendations are summarised in the infographic.





European Antibiotic Awareness Day



18th November was European Antibiotic Awareness Day (EAAD). Across all settings, healthcare workers marked this annual event and took it as an opportunity to remind everyone how valuable antibiotics are, how important it is that we only use them when we need them and to highlight that these amazing drugs are under threat from the growing problem of antimicrobial resistance.

HSE-AMRIC distributed EAAD promotion packs to hospital antimicrobial pharmacists and CHO antimicrobial pharmacists across the country to support local initiatives and raise awareness. Social media was full of photos of information stands and messages challenging day-do-day misinformation about antimicrobial resistance.

This year there are 10 short videos on <u>Bugs and Drugs</u> quizzes that were issued from HPSC twitter and @AntibioticPresc – 5 focused on AMS in the hospital setting and 5 focused on AMS in the community setting. The Bugs and Drugs quizzes were shared widely on twitter and used as resource on many EAAD stands across the country!

Thanks to all the healthcare workers who participated in EAAD and used it as an opportunity to raise awareness and promote the proper use of antibiotics in their setting!



AMRIC team stand Dr. Steevens



EAAD at the National Maternity Hospital



Bugs & Drugs quiz in Boyne House, Dundalk



Birr CNU



EAAD at St. Brigids Shaen

RESIST launches continue to rollout



Many thanks to all of the staff and residents for taking part in the rollout of RESIST in our community services. This programme helps us to refresh and energise our hand hygiene approach among both staff of the hospital and patients. The link nurses, our Hand Hygiene Trainers and our Infection Control Nurses help us to do this. If you have any photos or news of local launches please send them to us hcai.amrteam@hse.ie

St. Oliver Plunkett Community Unit, Dundalk

On 20th October, St. Oliver Plunkett Community Unit launched the HSE RESIST hand hygiene programme, to refresh the unit's hand hygiene messages and to keep promoting the importance of clean hands. RESIST programme is used as a way to share the message around hand hygiene and about how we use antibiotics.

Speaking at the launch of the RESIST programme Joan Mc Court ADON said, "In St Oliver Plunkett Community Unit we have a good record in hand hygiene but we are always looking to improve our standards. The RESIST programme will help us to do that and we are delighted to have been selected to be part of the rollout in HSE CHO residential services. We have always implemented good hand hygiene in practices in St Oliver Plunkett, but this new programme will help us to refresh and energise our hand hygiene approach. Along with our staff, our residents and their visitors have a role to play to help stop the spread of infections."

The Infection Prevention and Control Nurses (Lisa Fetherstone and Noeleen Hallahan) and Antimicrobial Pharmacist (Sarah Fagan) joined the staff in St Oliver Plunkett to support the launch of RESIST.

Lisa Fetherstone (ADON Infection Prevention and Control Midlands Meath Louth Community Health Organisation) added that "The RESIST programme is aimed not just for healthcare workers but also includes everyone entering a facility/service and includes residents and visitors. When healthcare workers like doctors, nurses and carers, keep their hands clean, they help prevent the spread of serious healthcare-associated infections (HCAIs)."



These infections can happen in any healthcare service and can be very serious for our residents.

We can all help stop the spread of these infections by cleaning our hands and join the Superbug Resistance. The IPC/AMS team will be extending the RESIST campaign across the CHO 8, and delighted that the initial launch is in St. Oliver Plunkett Community unit.

ADON, St Oliver Plunkett Joan Mc Court, IPC ADON Lisa Fetherstone, IPC CNM2 Noeleen Hallahan and AMP Sarah Fagan attending the launch of RESIST programme in St. Oliver Plunkett Community Nursing Unit





