

# GHF 2019

17<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GAY HEALTH FORUM  
FRIDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2019

## PROGRAMME GHF 2019

8:45am to 9:15am

**REGISTRATION (TEA & COFFEE)**

**SESSION 1:**

**WELCOME AND OPENING PRESENTATIONS**

**Chair: Ciarán McKinney, Chairperson, GHN**

9:15 to 9:20

Welcome: Ciarán McKinney, Gay Health Network

9:20 to 9:35

Opening Address and Launch of the 17th Annual Gay Health Forum: Catherine Byrne, TD, Minister of State at the Department of Health with responsibility for Health Promotion and the National Drugs Strategy.

9:35 to 9:50

GMHS Annual Report 2018: Siobhán O'Dea, Manager, Gay Men's Health Service (GMHS)

9:50 to 10:05

GHN Annual Report: Noel Sutton, Gay Health Network

10:05 to 10:15

Epidemiology of HIV and STIs amongst MSM in Ireland: Dr Aoife Colgan, Surveillance Scientist, Health Protection Surveillance Centre

**SESSION 2:**

**EUROPEAN MSM INTERNET SURVEY (EMIS) 2017**

**Chair: Dr Derval Igoe, Specialist in Public Health Medicine, HPSC**

10:15 to 10:40

European MSM Internet Survey (EMIS) 2017 - Response, Demographics Chemsex, PrEP and U=U: David Reid, Research Fellow, Sigma Research

10:40 to 10:55

Recruitment and Response to EMIS Ireland 2017: Claire Casey, EMIS Research Officer, Health Protection Surveillance Centre

11:00am to 11:30am:

Mid-morning Break

**SESSION 3:**

**THE 11<sup>TH</sup> NOEL WALSH MEMORIAL PRESENTATIONS**

**Chair: Martin Davoren, Executive Director, Sexual Health Centre, Cork**

11:30 to 11:40

Implementing the National Sexual Health Strategy – Progress towards the achievement of actions relating to MSM: Maeve O'Brien, HSE SHCPP

11:40 to 12:00

HIV-related Discrimination in Ireland – HIV Ireland Case Studies: Dr. Erin Nugent, HIV Ireland

12:00 to 12:30

Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U) - The Message & Movement: Bruce Richman, Founder of Prevention Access Campaign

12:30 to 1:00

Identity, Risk and Wellbeing in MSM: Professor Rusi Jaspal, Pro Vice-Chancellor, De Montfort University, Leicester, UK

**1:00pm to 1:45pm:**

**LUNCH**

**SESSION 4:**

**PrEP**

**Chair: Dr Susan Clarke, GUIDe Clinic, St. James's Hospital**

1:45 to 2:00

The PrEP Clinic at GMHS: Siobhán O'Dea, Manager, GMHS

2:00 to 2:30

The achievement of PrEP in Scotland and lessons learned: Nathan Sparling, Director of HIV Scotland

**SESSION 5:**

**PANEL DISCUSSION - HIV: THE SCIENCE AND THE REALITY**

**Chair: Adam Shanley, MSM Programme Manager, HIV Ireland**

2:30 to 3:45

Panelists:

Nathan Sparling, Director of HIV Scotland

Professor Rusi Jaspal, Pro Vice-Chancellor, De Montfort University

Bruce Richman, Founder of Prevention Access Campaign

David Reid, Research Fellow, Sigma Research

Andrew Leavitt, ACT UP Dublin

3:45 to 3:55

Synopsis of the Day and Closing Remarks: Bill Foley, Gay Health Network

GHF2019 is funded by the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme, the Gay Health Network, Abbott Laboratories, GSK Ireland, MSD Ireland and Janssen Ireland.



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## KEY MESSAGES OF THE 2019 GAY HEALTH FORUM #GHF2019

### 1. A person on effective treatment with a sustained undetectable viral load cannot transmit HIV to their sexual partners.

The preventive impact of effective HIV treatment highlights the need to maximise access to treatment in order to minimise and ultimately eradicate HIV transmission. Advocating the U=U message is also an important way to help reduce the stigma experienced by people living with HIV, whose sexual partners may be concerned about acquiring the virus unnecessarily.

We recommend consistent and unambiguous terminology when discussing U=U such as "no risk" or "zero risk" of sexual transmission of HIV, avoiding terms like "reduced risk", "negligible risk" and "minimal risk."

### 2. We want to end HIV transmission in Ireland. We believe that this is achievable, but only if we have access to all the preventative tools available to us.

PrEP is a key tool in achieving a break in new HIV transmissions.

We call on government to make PrEP free and accessible to those vulnerable to acquiring HIV.

### 3. Effective HIV & STI prevention work should be delivered within the context of a broader sexual health and wellbeing framework which addresses the range of social determinants of health that impact on sexual behaviour and risk for HIV.

We are calling on all those who work with gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men to achieve a cultural competency that celebrates diverse identities and understands the interconnectedness with sexual, mental, physical and social health.

### 4. Sexual health services in Ireland are stretched beyond capacity.

Prompt access to services for diagnosis and treatment of HIV and STIs is crucial in stemming rising rates, most of which disproportionately affect gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men.

We call on the government to properly fund and resource sexual health services throughout the country to ensure all those in need of sexual health services have prompt and appropriate access to care.

## Key Speakers

### Bruce Richman

#### Executive Director of Prevention Access Campaign's U=U Movement

Bruce is the executive director of Prevention Access Campaign's Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U), a growing international movement to share the revolutionary but largely unknown fact that people living with HIV on treatment with an undetectable viral load cannot transmit HIV to sexual partners. In 2012, nine years after his diagnosis, Bruce learned U=U. After recognizing that millions of people with HIV and the public were not being informed about this ground-breaking science, he joined with activists and researchers to ensure the science reaches the people it was intended to benefit. U=U is based on the principle that all people living with HIV have a right to accurate and meaningful information about their social, sexual, and reproductive health based on science not stigma.



### Nathan Sparling

#### Chief Executive of HIV Scotland

Nathan Sparling is the Chief Executive of HIV Scotland. Nathan leads HIV Scotland's team to ensure that all their work achieves the best outcomes for people living with and affected by HIV, ensuring they are involved at every step. Previously he worked in the House of Commons where he was a Senior Parliamentary Adviser, covering many social policy issues including pensions and the devolution of social security powers to the Scottish Parliament. He was a prominent campaigner on equal marriage in Scotland and was a Political Adviser on the Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Ratification of Convention) Act. As a PrEP user, Nathan heads an organisation that fought for PrEP to be made free on the Scottish NHS – a successful campaign for which HIV Scotland won the Cracking Campaign Award at the Scottish Charity Awards in 2018. He'll reflect on almost two years on PrEP access – full and free in Scotland – and what that means for getting to zero.



### Rusi Jaspal

#### Pro Vice-Chancellor at De Montfort University, Leicester, UK

Rusi Jaspal is Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, and Professor of Psychology and Sexual Health at De Montfort University, Leicester, UK. He is also an Adjunct Professor of Minority Research at Åbo Akademi University, Turku, Finland. Rusi Jaspal is a Chartered Psychologist and Fellow of the British Psychological Society. He has written over 100 articles and book chapters focusing mainly on the social psychological aspects of sexual identity, sexual health and behaviour among gay men. The presentation focuses on enhancing sexual healthcare practice among marginalised groups, namely men who have sex with men (MSM) and MSM of ethnic minority background. Both groups are at disproportionately high risk of poor sexual health. The presentation will provide insight into the lives, narratives and identities of individuals from these marginalised groups, thereby raising awareness of inequalities experienced by members of these groups. It is argued that poor psychological wellbeing can lead MSM to engage in behaviours that put them at risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Possible interventions for enhancing sexual health are proposed.

