



Highlighting the plight of those suffering from **lymphoedema**

AN open day to highlight **lymphoedema**, to reach out to those who may be living with the condition and to raise awareness of it within the medical community, was recently held in Dublin.

The keynote speaker was Dr Vaughan Keeley, an expert in **lymphoedema** and consultant in palliative medicine at Derby Hospitals. **Lymphoedema** occurs when the lymphatic system fails to function causing persistent swelling and can affect any part of the body. Persons may be born with **lymphoedema** (primary) or develop it (secondary) because the lymphatic system has been damaged.

Approximately 15,000 people in Ireland are estimated to have **lymphoedema** and the numbers are rising, with over 1,200 developing the condition each year following treatment for cancer.

Lymphoedema Ireland is also highlighting the lack of standardised services and referral pathways, as well as the unequal distribution of services and supports available.

According to Nina Murray, chairperson of **Lymphoedema** Ireland, "There are thousands and thousands of people suffering from **lymphoedema** who have no medical, moral or financial support. In the areas where limited public services exist, they are fragmented and medical expertise in diagnosing and referring is

patchy and under-resourced. The HSE knows this, as they carried out a review last year of **lymphoedema** services throughout Ireland but have yet to publish it.

"We are calling on the HSE to publish the findings of the report on the lack of **lymphoedema** service provision, and to put in place a plan to develop services in recogni-

tion of the growing incidence of the condition," she added.

Throughout March, **awareness** events took place in hospitals across the country and the Irish Cancer Society's

Daffodil Centres and other facilities had trained nurses and volunteers available to provide information on **lymphoedema** to anyone with queries about the condition or their risk of developing it.

For more information see www.lymphireland.com, find **Lymphoedema** Ireland on Facebook or Twitter @lymphireland.



■ Pictured at the open day to mark the end of Lymphoedema Awareness Month were Antoinette Dashua, Caroline Stack, Lindsay Walsh and Teresa Gilmartin from Sláinte an Chláir.