



COPD Support Ireland (COPDSI)

Manifesto for COPD | November 2015

COPD Support Ireland is a national charity that supports people living with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). We are Ireland's only national COPD support and advocacy body, bringing together local support groups from around Ireland, to help those living with, and caring for someone with COPD. We were founded in 2013 and combine front-line service provision with building the capacity of people living with COPD to take action on issues that affect their lives.

COPD is an incurable, life-limiting but treatable disease that affects 380,000 people in Ireland, yet only 110,000 people are diagnosed. The burden of care is substantial with 13,685 people hospitalised yearly and spending on average 9.5 days in hospital. The total cost of COPD hospitalisations was **€70,813,040 in 2014**.

COPD Support Ireland has devised a series of **practical and fair recommendations** for earlier diagnosis and access to services, better care and improved management of the disease that will result in a reduction of the current cost of care to the State. These recommendations are rooted in **our core values of equality of access** and the belief that all people should be treated with **dignity and respect**.

Key Actions for Ireland's Next Government

1. Spirometry

Commitment: Spirometry testing to be made available in primary care.

COPD is largely preventable and easily diagnosed by spirometry which is the gold standard for diagnosis, assessing and monitoring COPD. COPD is under-diagnosed in primary and secondary care and late diagnosis is common, leading to unnecessary disability. Early detection of the disease is vital in slowing its progress.

2. Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Commitment: Continuous Pulmonary Rehabilitation Programmes to be made available in every acute hospital

A Pulmonary Rehabilitation Programme (PRP) is an intervention that includes exercise training, education and behaviour change, and is designed to improve the physical and psychological condition of people with chronic respiratory disease. Exercise is a core treatment for COPD and PRP works in supporting self-management of the disease. These eight-week programmes need to be made available in every acute hospital on a continuous basis.

3. Medical Cards

Commitments: Medical cards to be provided for people living with COPD

COPD should be recognised as a long-term incurable illness that requires multiple forms of interventions, including medical, physical and social responses. Many people living with COPD are unable to work due to the illness or are on low incomes. Medication and medical care can be cost-prohibitive, jeopardising people's health and well-being.

4. Outreach and integrated care programmes

Commitments: Outreach and integrated care programmes to be attached to every acute hospital

The Outreach Programme is a service that provides active treatment for a limited time period in a patient's home. The alternative is hospital in-patient care. It facilitates early discharge from hospital and enables people to build confidence in effectively managing their chronic condition.

The Integrated Care Programme improves the diagnosis and management of COPD patients in the primary care setting by providing spirometry and a programme of care that will improve health outcomes and reduce service demand. Currently these programmes are only available in a small number of areas, yet offer a huge advantage on in-patient care and provide patients with options.

5. Advice and information

Commitment: National advice and information helpline to be established for COPD

The high rates of hospitalisation of COPD could be addressed through the provision of a patient-centred and trusted service that supports the models of care for COPD. A national low-cost professional helpline for people living with COPD would:

- ✓ Enable people to better manage their COPD
- ✓ Provide greater awareness of COPD
- ✓ Provide patient support, education and information in line with clinical care programmes
- ✓ Improve the health and well-being of people living with COPD through an integrated approach and a focus on prevention and health promotion