

**Irish Medical Organisation Motions**

**25/04/2019**

Irish Doctors for the Environment (IDE) is an association of doctors and medical students in Ireland who aim to create awareness, interest and implement action around ‘*planetary health’*, environmental health and the impact it has on our patients’ health. IDE would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the unanimous decision taken by the Irish Medical Organization to pass three historic motions in addressing climate change, which has been recognized by the Lancet as “the greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century”. (1)

Irish Doctors for Environment are delighted with the result. “Clinicians across all specialties are recognising the window of opportunity we have to adapt and mitigate to climate chaos. These Motions are excellent examples of how solutions to reduce climate change can be beneficial to our health both directly and indirectly by protecting our environment” -. Dr Sandra Green

The motions proposed to the Irish Medical Organisation (IMO) on 25th April by two NCHD (Non Consultant House Doctor) IMO Members Dr Sandra Green and Dr Philippa White, both co-founding members of Irish Doctors for the Environment. The motions included -

*1. The IMO calls on the Government to incentivize sustainable energy and to penalise unsustainable energy provision, and to mandate Government Departments and Agencies to prioritise the procurement on sustainable energy services urgently in line with Ireland Targets under COP21 Paris Agreement in 2015.*

*2. The IMO calls on the government to increase investment in cycling and walking to 20% of the transport budget, in line with the recommendations by UNEP, and towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 3, 7, 11 and 13 of air quality benefits, climate change mitigation and the benefits to health of active transport.*

*3. The IMO calls on the Government to prioritise access to healthy, sustainable and culturally appropriate food at all Government funded facilities, including the healthcare facilities, taking consideration of the issues raised in the Eat Lancet Planetary Health Diet.*

Ireland is projected to miss the 2020 targets as outlined by the legally binding Paris Agreement 2015. (2) Deep reductions in green house gases must be made to prevent a 1.5 degree rise from pre industrial level to avoid further climate-related economic, sociopolitical and health risks. In 2016, 9.5% of Ireland energy was sourced from renewable energy and likewise a mere 27% of Irish electricity was from renewable energy sources. (3)

The Active Transport motion is timely following the Open Letter to An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar and Ministers Shane Ross (Transport), Richard Bruton (Climate Change), Simon Harris (Health) and Minister of State Catherine Byrne (Health) from a collaboration of Health and Active Transport organisations last week also calling for the government to ensure that active transport will form an integral part of the forthcoming ‘Climate Action Plan’.

Similarly the HSE last month launched the Food, Nutrition and Hydration Policy for Adult Patients in Acute Hospitals. While this document creates guidelines regarding patient specific diets, reducing processed food and providing culturally appropriate food it does not mention food sustainability beyond ‘food waste’ and no reference on sourcing food locally.

References:

1. Watts N, Adger WN, Agnolucci P et al. *‘Health and climate change: policy responses to protect public health.’* Lancet. 2015; (published online June 23.) [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(15)60854-62](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736%2815%2960854-62%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

2. Kelly de Bruin, Aykut Mert Yakut, 'The economic and environmental impacts of increasing the Irish carbon tax', [Report], ESRI, 09/10/2018, ESRI Research Series No. 7

3. Environment Protection Agency (2018). *Ireland’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections.* Ireland

*"To walk through a forest uncharacteristically barren of snow in wintertime, or through a hospital ward dominated by older and chronically ill patients, is to witness two of the greatest challenges of our time: the degradation of the Earth’s ecosystems and the shift in human disease towards that driven by our lifestyles and our surroundings. Both challenges are inseparable: climate change, ecosystem destruction, massive losses in biodiversity, a warming ocean, soil degradation, and pollution are wreaking havoc on our planet and sickening us." [-](https://ide.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9f5f7eaa3f17e0fba6bb6c349&id=f759d7d56c&e=45fbbb9670" \t "_blank)***[Lancet Global Health - Human health and environmental sustainability: the 21st century's grand challenges](https://ide.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9f5f7eaa3f17e0fba6bb6c349&id=c140bf9195&e=45fbbb9670" \t "_blank)**