

Alliance Brief



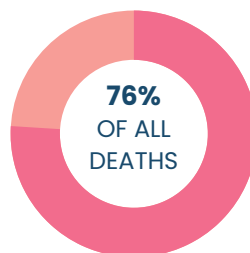
The Health Promotion Alliance Ireland (HPAI) is an all-island coalition of over twenty leading organisations with a shared interest in advocating for major policy change to promote the primary prevention of chronic disease.

Why has Health Promotion Alliance Ireland formed?

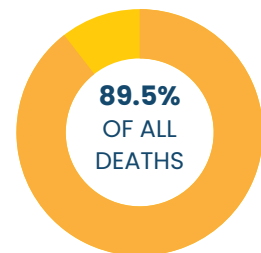
The health service is increasingly challenged by the burden of chronic diseases, such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, dementia and respiratory conditions. These conditions place a significant strain on the healthcare system, the economy, families and individuals.

Chronic diseases are the leading causes of death across the island of Ireland ^{1,2}:

Republic of Ireland



Northern Ireland



Current political mandates in both jurisdictions, including the Securing Ireland's Future Programme for Government and Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most, underscore the urgency for the HPAI to champion primary prevention.

An all-island approach is essential to address shared public health challenges, leverage collective resources, and ensure health services complement wider strategies to address the commercial and social determinants of health.

To address the causes of chronic disease a major shift to primary prevention is urgently required. Our main goal is to effect change in the key policy areas of tobacco, alcohol, unhealthy diets and physical activity.

The HPAI prioritises primary prevention by addressing the structural drivers of ill health. Rather than focusing on awareness campaigns or early detection, this approach prevents the onset of disease through robust regulation of the commercial and social environment. Primary prevention provides a more effective, equitable, and cost-effective alternative to reactive treatment.

Find out more at: irishheart.ie/hpai

Contact us at: hpai@irishheart.ie

Our Vision

A future without preventable chronic disease.

Our Mission

To improve the long-term health and wellbeing of people on the island of Ireland by:

- creating healthier physical and food environments
- reorienting the health system towards prevention
- minimising exposure to risk factors for chronic disease

The Alliance aims to work in partnership to drive positive systemic changes and influence public health policies that empower and facilitate individuals and communities to lead healthier lives while reducing health inequalities.

We advocate for the WHO best buys and primary prevention policies. We actively challenge industry tactics that seek to obstruct or delay essential public health measures.

Health Promotion Alliance Ireland Policy Priorities

We call on the Irish government and the Northern Ireland Executive to:

1. Reorient policies, including Sláintecare and the Health and Social Care NI Reset Plan, towards primary prevention by addressing the root causes of chronic disease to prevent onset.
2. Commit to a robust delivery of the successor to the respective Healthy Ireland Framework in the Republic of Ireland and the Making Life Better Framework in Northern Ireland. These frameworks must be underpinned by action plans that shift focus from individual responsibility to the social and commercial determinants and structural drivers of chronic disease.
3. Recognise that the circumstances in which we are born, live and age are primary drivers of chronic disease by:
 - Prioritising population-based strategies to address health and social inequalities.
 - Examining the influence of corporate entities on health and ensuring vested interests are transparently navigated within health policymaking.
 - Embedding explicit guidance within all forthcoming public health strategies to ensure a consistent approach when engaging with health-harming industries. This guidance must expose how industry tactics undermine and postpone the implementation of vital, evidence-informed public health measures.

“Preventing chronic disease is a political choice. Waiting lists will continue to soar unless there is greater political will to implement chronic disease prevention policies which are more effective, more equitable and more cost-efficient than targeting individuals”.

Health Promotion Alliance Ireland
Opening Statement to Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health
14th February 2024

[1] Irish Heart Foundation (2023). Primary Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease:

Best Practice and Lessons from Ireland. Available Online: https://irishheart.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/IHF_CVD_PP_Summary_SCREEN.pdf

[2] British Heart Foundation (2026). NCD Alliance Northern Ireland. Available Online: <https://www.bhf.org.uk/what-we-do/in-your-area/northern-ireland/campaigning-and-influencing-in-northern-ireland/ncd-prevention-report>