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**Diabetes Time Bomb Threatens Health Budget says MEP**

The fact that ¼ million people in Ireland suffer from diabetes, and that this number increases each year, indicates the vital necessity for greater resources to be invested in tackling the disease.

This was the reaction of Independent MEP Marian Harkin to the publication this week of the World Health Organisation report which indicates that 422 million people worldwide suffer from diabetes, a figure which has increased from 108 million since 1980.

“In Ireland it is estimated that 225,840 people live with diabetes and the growing problem of obesity in the country indicates that figure will continue to increase”, she said. She called for increased resources to be devoted to combatting diabetes and to tackle the growing problem of childhood obesity much of it associated with sugar consumption.

“According to the Health Ireland Survey 854,165 adults over 40 in the Republic of Ireland are at increased risk of developing, or have, Type 2 diabetes and currently 23 children are diagnosed each month with Type 1 diabetes”, she said. One in eight children were late diagnosed and go on to develop diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) a very serious condition caused by extremely high blood glucose, she said.

She praised the work of Diabetes Ireland in highlighting the need for GPs to consider diabetes at an early stage when children and teenagers present feeling unwell.

“The increased role of sugar in relation to obesity, and diabetes, very much influenced our recent vote in the European Parliament when we voted to decrease the levels of sugar in baby food across Europe”, she said. “With 63% of the Irish population deemed to be overweight, 27% suffering from obesity and 36% physically inactive, there is a time bomb threatening the national health budget which already allocates 10% of total resources to combatting diabetes”, Independent MEP Marian Harkin concluded.

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