After 500 days since the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill was first introduced to Seanad Éireann, it seems this legislation will recommence its passage of completion. Recently, when delivering his ‘Nomination of Government’ speech to Dáil Éireann, An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, outlined that the completion of the Bill would be a priority for his government, which we welcome. Sadly, during this largely unnecessary delay, our corrosive relationship with alcohol has continued unabated; our consumption levels have again risen significantly and the harms to families and communities and the strains on our health services have continued. This burden has also posed enormous economic costs on our country.

On the reverse of this letter, the Alcohol Health Alliance have quantified some of the extent of the harm that is pervasive throughout our society, which will continue in the absence of essential and historic public health legislation.

It is our strong belief that the measures within the Bill, when taken together, will provide a reasonable, pragmatic means to achieving the ambition of this progressive public health initiative – namely to protect children, to ease the pressure on our health services and make for a healthier and more productive society for everyone.

Many legislators have voiced support for the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill, yet sought to weaken specific measures; the cohesiveness of all the Bill’s measures can be its, and yours, historic legacy. I would urge you to support this Bill in its entirety and take an important step forward in the health of our nation.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Frank Murray
Chair

June 2017

ABOUT THE ALCOHOL HEALTH ALLIANCE

The Alcohol Health Alliance is an initiative to support the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill, established by the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI) and Alcohol Action Ireland. This alliance brings together a wide range of Ireland’s leading charities, NGOs, health campaigners and medical professionals, and its mission is to reduce the harm caused by alcohol in our society.

CONTACT: AHAireland@rcpi.ie   TEL: 01 878 0610   http://alcoholireland.ie/campaigns/aha/
Since the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill began its legislative process, it’s now over 500 days since then...

Alcohol consumption in Ireland increased during 2016 to 11.46 litres of pure alcohol per person aged 15+ in 2016, an increase of 4.8% from 2015.

1,614 deaths were alcohol related that is 3 per day.

418,410 days of alcohol related absenteeism.

5,497 cases of alcohol related self-harm have been treated.

807,000 hospital beds have been lost to alcohol related illnesses at a cost of €656m.

What’s possible:

- Change the culture of drinking in Ireland
- Safer streets, better nights out
- Less pressure on our health services
- A healthier society for all
- Better family life, happier children

What’s next...

- Better labelling so you know what you’re drinking
- Strongest alcohol is not the cheapest alcohol
- Alcohol is no longer an everyday grocery
- No special offers for excessive drinking
- Children are less exposed to alcohol advertising
- No progress has been made since second stage was completed in Seand Eireann

Two thirds of Irish people agree that government has a responsibility to implement public health measures to address high alcohol consumption.

Now is the time to act! #phabsaveslives