

**Proposed HSE Cut-Backs on Nutritional Supplements will seriously affect Ill and Older People and their Carers**

(Release date, December, 2008) Latest HSE cut-backs being proposed by the Department of Health on Monday, December 1<sup>st</sup> will see Government limiting essential oral nutritional supplements (ONS) for ill and older people. A move that on a short-term basis may save the state funds however cost the HSE more in the long-term outside of the unquantifiable personal cost to older people, their families and carers.

"We have heard from last week's Nutritional Industry Group conference that cut-backs on nutritional care could have a significant adverse affect on the health of thousands of sick and older people", says Enda Egan, CEO of The Carers Association.

"These cut-backs will affect not just older and sick people; they will also seriously affect their family carers who will have to cope with increased illness. These measures could affect the quality of living of those older and ill and their carers and we would ask the HSE to reverse this decision immediately."

According to Dr. Mike Stroud, speaking at the recent Nutritional Industry Group conference, malnutrition is a prevalent problem amongst chronically ill and elderly patients and Ireland's cut-backs are at odds advice from the ESPEN (European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism).

"We are very concerned that these cut-backs will have a serious impact on vulnerable patients and their carers. Ireland's family Carers already save the state over €2 billion per year and Government is potentially making their work and lives much more difficult by limiting the supply of ONS available for those cared for", says Egan.

**The Carers Association is the National voluntary organisation of family carers in the home, providing support services, respite, training and information to carers throughout Ireland. The Carers Association can be contacted on the National Careline Freefone 1800 24 07 24 or see [www.carersireland.com](http://www.carersireland.com).**

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