



Amputee Ireland demands that the needs of amputees are no longer ignored on European Limb Loss Day

The rights of those who have lost limbs and the barriers that they face will be highlighted across Europe on European Limb Loss Day on 3 December 2011, as part of a European Week for People with Disabilities.

Amputees face a host of daily challenges including personal mobility, dexterity, delays in access to healthcare and decreased employment options. Support charity Amputee Disability Federation Ireland (Amputee Ireland) welcomes European Limb Loss Day amid calls for better care structures and free prosthetics for amputees.

Michael McWilliam, Amputee Ireland comments that there are “currently intolerable delays in approval for prosthesis for those with a medical card. Long and frustrating waits are experienced in the sanctioning process across the country and indeed variances in different counties – ranging from 13 days in Donegal, 82 days in Monaghan to 189 days in Wicklow*. European Limb Loss Day will provide a chance to increase awareness of the ‘hidden disability’ that is limb loss and the often ignored needs of amputees in Ireland.”

Increasing numbers of people are affected by limb loss and Amputee Ireland represents the interests of over 4,000 amputees in Ireland. Limb loss can result from a medical illness, congenital abnormality (from birth) or trauma such as motorbike, car, farm, workplace or factory accident. Most of the amputations that occur every year could be prevented.

Amputee Ireland works hard to raise awareness of the risks of amputation and ways of preventing amputation. Many amputations involve complications related to diabetes or peripheral arterial disease. An increasing number of amputations are commonly linked to diabetes with over 60 per cent in Ireland among older people.

A key focus for the charity is its campaign for free prosthetics for amputees. A first or new prosthetic is expensive and not all amputees have medical cards. Those with private medical insurance experience rising premium costs yet decreasing benefits, and some insurance providers do not offer cover for a new prosthesis.

On European Limb Loss day, Amputee Ireland is raising awareness and encouraging decision makers in government and the Irish health sector to be aware of the unique challenges faced by amputees. “Amputee Ireland encourages those decision makers to consider the needs experienced by amputees and their carers on their often traumatic journey. An amputee needs specific support structures to help adjust to the loss of a limb, to use a prosthesis and to manage pain and other sensations” concluded Michael McWilliam.

Amputee Ireland offers a range of support structures to amputees, their families and carers. Among the initiatives offered is football training sessions in association with the Football Association of Ireland (FAI). Details of sessions and locations are available on www.amputee.ie. Amputee Ireland also recently launched an information leaflet that provides details of the services and supports available to amputees



and their carers. The leaflet is available to view and download from www.amputee.ie or is available on request from info@amputee.ie.

Amputee Ireland was established to help amputees achieve independence, participation, social and occupational integration in the life of the community and encourages new members to join. Membership is free and an application can be downloaded at www.amputee.ie.

* Figures are averaged over initial six months of 2011.

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