

**Embargoed until 00.01am 17<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024**

## **Minister Stephen Donnelly presented with Laura Brennan Award 2024**

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024, Dublin.** The Irish Society of Gynaecological Oncology (ISGO) will present the Laura Brennan Award 2024 to Minister Stephen Donnelly at the Presidential Plenary Session of the International Gynaecologic Cancer Society Annual Global Meeting 2024 at the Convention Centre Dublin. Laura's parents, Bernie and Larry Brennan, will be in attendance for the presentation.

Laura Brennan received the inaugural award in Belfast in 2018 for her endless campaign for the HPV vaccine. With Laura, it was decided that the Laura Brennan Award would be presented on an annual basis by the ISGO to a patient or member of the public as a recognition of outstanding achievement in the areas of gynaecological oncology patient advocacy and or patient and public involvement in research.

The Presidential Plenary session at IGCS 2024 Annual Global Meeting will focus on overcoming barriers and implementing effective strategies to eliminate cervical cancer. Cervical cancer, a preventable and treatable disease, remains a significant health issue in many parts of the world despite our extensive knowledge and experience.

Prof Donal Brennan who will moderate this session said *“Laura’s advocacy was responsible for turning around HPV vaccine uptake in Ireland. Many other countries worldwide have faced similar challenges and it is important to highlight the power of the patient voice on this international stage. Laura’s parents and family continue to promote her legacy and the ISGO are delighted to continue supporting them.”*

Minister Donnelly worked closely with the Brennan family to successfully implement the Laura Brennan Catch-Up Programme as well as supporting the roll out of the Eliminate Cervical Cancer by 2040. He has demonstrated that he is committed to working with all stakeholders and organisations for the benefit of young adults and women's health. His commitment to prevention is very much aligned with Laura's legacy.

Laura's parents, Bernie and Larry Brennan said *“We congratulate Minister Donnelly on being this year’s recipient of the Laura Brennan Award. We had the pleasure of working with him and his*

*Department on the continuation of the School HPV programme and the provision and roll out of the Catch-Up programme, which we feel will have many benefits beyond those related to HPV. Laura, by her advocacy sadly highlighted the tragedy that can occur when a vaccine preventable disease is not prevented and really awakened the country to the benefits of vaccination. We believe Minister Donnelly has contributed to Laura's legacy and the very high uptake of the HPV Schools and Catch-Up programme."*

Dr Dearbhaile Collins, President of ISGO said *"The Laura Brennan Award holds a special place within the ISGO, a society which has the patient voice deeply embedded. We saw how Laura's voice changed things in Ireland. As a clinician who sees the devastation of cervical cancer, I look forward to supporting all efforts towards Elimination of Cervical Cancer. "*

Previous recipients of the award were Joan Moore (2019) Cork, Jacqueline Daly (2020) Galway, Kim Hanly (2021) Dublin, Roberta Horgan (2022) and Bridget Carr (2023). Bridget co-chaired the IGCS Patient and Caregiver summit this week.

**About Laura Brennan:** Laura Brennan was born on the 30th September 1992 in Co Clare to Bernie and Larry Brennan. Laura grew up with three brothers; Colin, Kevin and Fergal. In December 2016 Laura was diagnosed with cervical cancer, in September the following year she was told that she had incurable disease. Laura was unaware of the existence of the HPV vaccine. Laura approached the Health Service Executive (HSE) in 2017 to see what she could do to improve the uptake of the vaccine, which was at 51%. When Laura died on the 20th March 2019, the HPV vaccine uptake was at 70% and is currently over 80%. Laura is attributed to this significant uptake of the vaccine and is recognised for saving many lives now and into the future as a result of her campaign.

<https://isgo.ie/laura-brennan-award/>

**About ISGO:** The ISGO is an All-Ireland society and comprises clinicians, nurses, scientists, pathologists and other health service professionals and patient advocates. The aim of the society is to improve clinical outcomes for women with and at risk of gynaecological cancers by focusing on the full continuum of cancer care; from prevention to diagnosis, treatment, survivorship and palliation. [www.isgo.ie](http://www.isgo.ie)

**About IGCS:** Established in 1987 as a not-for-profit, the International Gynecologic Cancer Society (IGCS) unites interdisciplinary members of the gynecologic cancer care team including



Irish Society of  
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Irish Society of Gynaecological Oncology  
Public and Patient Involvement Group

gynecologic oncologists, radiation oncologists, medical oncologists, pathologists, allied health providers, and other clinicians and researchers who devote their professional lives to gynecologic oncology research and patient care. [www.igcs.org](http://www.igcs.org)

Annual Global Meeting: [IGCS Annual Global Meeting in Gynecologic Oncology](#)

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