

# Ninth Annual Irish Veterinary Nursing Association Congress

**The Irish Veterinary Nursing Association (IVNA) committee, in conjunction with our main sponsors Royal Canin and Allianz, is currently in the process of finalising the Ninth Annual IVNA Congress 2018, which will take place on Saturday and Sunday, May 12 and 13, 2018; and this year it will be held at the Red Cow Moran Hotel, Dublin, writes Lorraine McDonnell, vice-chairperson, IVNA**



After last year's successful congress, the committee analysed all the evaluation forms from both congress and various IVNA events over the last year to set out the schedule for this year.

We aim to incorporate topics that will suit both newly qualified and more experienced nurses in practice and have an exciting line-up with varied topics.

Starting off the Saturday will be Shane Guerin MVB MACVSc Cert SAO DVCS Dip ECVS MRCVS, a partner in Gilabbey Veterinary Hospital in Cork city, specialising in small animal surgery with a special interest in orthopaedic and spinal surgery. Along with Shane, we will have Mairead Deasy VNDip AVN Dip HE CVN RVN, who works as head theatre nurse at Gilabbey. Both Shane and Mairead work together on a daily basis and they will share their experiences and show how good communication works well.

Helen Chan, who has 16 years of experience and has been a training partner with Aware since 2012, will speak on positive mental health at work with her presentation entitled: 'Building strength for the future'.

Dr Maureen Byrne MSc PhD, who received her certification in 2014 as a clinical animal behaviourist, by the Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour (ASAB). She is the first, and, so far, only certificated clinical animal behaviourist (CCAB) in Ireland. She will speak about dealing with canine aggression in the veterinary hospital.

James Madden MVB Cert FS is a veterinary officer, employed by Leitrim County Council. James is a member of the Local Authority Control of Dogs Working Group and has participated in drafting Dog Breeding Establishment Legislation and Guidelines. He will be speaking to us on the national strategy for stray dogs in Ireland.

The last lecture on Saturday is 'Managing feline stress' presented by Roisin Foran RVN ISFM DipFN, a founding member and head nurse at Just Cat's Veterinary Clinic,

Dublin's only cat clinic. Roisin has achieved a Diploma in Feline Nursing from the International Society of Feline Medicine.

Due to the popularity and success of last year we have continued with the addition of the third practical session, which means there will once again be three streams running concurrently.

Dr Maureen Byrne MSc PhD will present again. Following on from Saturday's lecture, she will present on 'A practical guide to dealing with canine aggression in the veterinary hospital'.

Our second practical is 'The good, the bad and the ugly of diagnostic imaging', which will be presented by William Hayden, a partner in Nutgrove Veterinary Hospital, Dublin. He holds the Royal College of Radiologists Certificate in Radiology. He currently provides referral service in all areas of imaging and endoscopy.

Our third practical on Sunday will be 'The practical guide to the ups and down of blood pressure and capnography', which will be given by Georgina Murphy Dip AVN (Surg), RCVS. Georgina currently works as senior nurse for the anaesthesia department in University College Dublin's Veterinary Hospital (UCDVH).

You can register now by visiting our website [www.ivna.ie](http://www.ivna.ie) and please keep an eye on our Facebook page for the most up-to-date version of the programme. The congress schedule and registration details will also be distributed in the Veterinary Ireland Journal. As usual, we will have early bird rates, which run until March 31, 2018

## IVNA AWARDS AND BARBECUE

With so much positive feedback from last year's more relaxed social night, we have decided once again to hold our award's night barbecue. Our three awards will be presented to honour the 2018 Veterinary Nurse of the Year (sponsored by Royal Canin) and the 2018 Student Nurse of the Year (sponsored by Allianz). This year we have changed our third award to Practice Manager of the Year (sponsored by Bayer), instead of Support Staff of the Year.

The awards are to acknowledge outstanding efforts made by veterinary nurses, student veterinary nurses and practice managers, who go above and beyond for their patients, owners, and colleagues alike. These individuals can be nominated by the public or a colleague. The IVNA Awards nominations have officially opened.

The process of which these winners are selected are as follows:

Six finalists will be selected from each category from all nominations received by March 31, 2018, and the winner will be selected by the sponsoring company. No member of the IVNA committee has any input into the overall winners. Each winner will receive a holiday gift voucher and a trophy will be presented in all categories. The nominator of the winning nomination in each category will also receive a voucher for €50. The awards will be presented at the Ninth Annual IVNA Congress during the barbecue on Saturday, May 12.

If you think someone you know deserves this award for the work they do, please go to our website on [www.ivna.ie](http://www.ivna.ie) and fill out the nomination form.

### WINNING NOMINATION 2017

Last year's winner of the Veterinary Nurse of the Year was Ailbhe Lawlor RVN from Raheny Veterinary Hospital. The following winning nomination by Raheny Veterinary Hospital was submitted by owner and veterinary practitioner, Patrick Keating MVB MRCVS:

"I wish to nominate Ailbhe Lawlor for the IVNA Nursing Award this year. Ailbhe has worked for at Raheny Veterinary Hospital since she qualified. The night before Ailbhe commenced employment, a relative passed away and she insisted in coming in to work as she didn't want to let anyone down. This demonstrated to me, as an employer, the incredible work ethic Ailbhe possesses. She is incredibly dedicated to her work and to animal welfare. Raheny Vet Hospital is a very busy practice with five to six vets and eight nurses, so the caseload is large and varied. I have never once seen Ailbhe finish her shift until every animal under her care has been made as comfortable as possible. We have a busy surgical list on a daily basis and she will always check that the analgesics and other medications have been administered. All of the tasks assigned to her are carried out in an exceptionally conscientious and professional manner. All of the vets in the practice love working with Ailbhe in surgery as they can trust her 100% in her attention to anaesthetic monitoring, etc. This is also reflected throughout her duties in clinics, hospital wards, etc.

I recently decided to invite the existing nurses to apply for the position of head nurse. When I interviewed Ailbhe, I was astounded by the detail she presented. She devised a much more effective deployment of nursing staff to make the hospital work more efficiently. She had obviously spent a lot of time and effort working on her presentation. She also presented detailed suggestions for various nursing clinic initiatives, which were very impressive. Even though more senior colleagues applied for the position, Ailbhe was chosen and it was completely the correct decision. Since she was promoted, Ailbhe has followed through on her commitments and I can see a huge improvement in the running of the hospital.

As if she didn't have enough to occupy her, Ailbhe also volunteers for Kildare Animal Sanctuary. She spends much of her time off rescuing injured birds and other animals in need. She has come to work with injured geese, seagulls,



**Lisa Joyce, IVNA chairperson; Ailbhe Lawlor RVN, 2017 Veterinary Nurse of the Year; and Marguerite Treacy, Royal Canin.**

bats and rabbits, to name but a few, and each will be nursed and treated to the absolute highest standard.

Ailbhe has a gentle, quiet personality, who would certainly not put herself forward for awards, but I think she is totally deserving. She is an absolute credit to the veterinary nursing profession. Nurses do an incredible job in a veterinary practise and, as a vet qualified almost 35 years and who has owned a veterinary practise for over 30 of those years, I have worked with many fine nurses who I admired for the excellent job they did. However, and it's not a statement I would make lightly, Ailbhe Lawlor is the finest veterinary nurse I have had the pleasure to work with. I hope you will strongly consider her for an award and feel free to contact you should you require any further information."

### CHARITY OF THE YEAR

This year, our charity of the year is Community Cat Network, an organisation that was founded in April 2012 and operates mainly in Cork County, although they also cover West Waterford and have recently expanded to South Tipperary (Clonmel area).

This small organisation is run by volunteers only. They do Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programme and assist the public to neuter stray and feral cats, as well as helping with emergency situations (sick and injured cats). They also hope in the future to put in place some neutering schemes for pet owners. They also help and work with other established rescues when a cat is in need of treatment or kittens need to be rescued. They believe that TNR helps to solve the problem of cat overpopulation at its root. They also assist the public to rehome cats and kittens (all neutered prior to being advertised) via their 'private rehoming' platform. They place a strong emphasis in educating the public and see themselves as assisting them to solve the problem. They have five main cat-trapping volunteers covering the whole area. Despite this small number, they have helped a total of 992 cats in 2017. They work very closely with a number of vet practices that have offered a discounted rate for neutering the cats they bring. You can find more information on their website:

[www.communitycatsnetwork.wordpress.com](http://www.communitycatsnetwork.wordpress.com)