

Independent Scientific Advocacy Group

A Better Way Forward: **Toward Elimination of Covid-19**

Are we Surrendering to a Fourth Wave?

ISAG Press Conference Wednesday 7 April 2021 at 12.00pm via Zoom and Social Media platforms

There is a high risk that Ireland is now entering its fourth wave of COVID-19, with a further risk of a fifth wave amplified by new SARS-CoV-2 variants.

Despite months in a Level 5 Living With Covid lockdown, we are not prepared for what may come, nor has this lockdown been effective enough to lead to a safe exit.

The Independent Scientific Advocacy Group (ISAG) strongly criticises the letter and models sent by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET) to the Minister for Health on the 29 March, 2021. This letter offers only defeatist scenarios for the coming months and does not offer the clear and present safe path to effective suppression. It is a formal surrender to the virus.

The Government's current travel quarantine measures are inadequate and will not prevent the introduction of new SARS-CoV-2 variants into the country. The importation of the B117 variant has already exacted a terrible toll in human lives and misery, and the P1 variant poses a similar or greater threat to the country over the coming months. The Government still has not empowered local Public Health teams to effectively contain outbreaks.

The vaccine programme is impressive, but alone it will neither quickly nor comprehensively give sufficient immunity to the population in order to end the Living With Covid lockdowns, or to prevent a fourth and maybe a fifth wave.

ISAG believes that Ireland needs a positive strategy aimed at aggressively suppressing the virus. A detailed and scientifically informed strategy will save lives,

protect long-term health and would allow for a safe and stable re-opening of society and our domestic economy, sooner.

We are calling on the Irish Government to take decisive action now. To revise our strategy to maximise our chances of a sustainable summer re-opening and the avoidance of further surges of infections, deaths, long-term disability and the need for further long national lockdowns.

We can develop a comprehensive strategy to maintain the effective suppression of SARS-CoV-2 transmission in the community, while sustainably opening society and the economy with Level 1 restrictions, at the least, in Summer 2021.

ISAG will set out our position and answer any questions at a Press Conference and Public Meeting held on Zoom:

Date and Time: Wednesday, 7 April 2021 at 12.00 PM

Link to Attend on Zoom:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_rD291FHVTUqUPM3W-oz1Lq

It will also be streamed live on the ISAG twitter account, facebook page and YouTube channel.

This Press Conference and Public Meeting will be an opportunity for members of the media and the public to ask questions, which ISAG members will answer.

We welcome **in advance** questions from members of the press, politicians, special interest groups and members of our society. Please send questions in advance to isagcovid@gmail.com so that we can ensure that they are answered. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions during the Press Conference using the written Q&A function.

Prof. Anthony Staines and Prof. Gabriel Scally will briefly describe the ISAG position. We will then summarize the epidemiological situation in Ireland, before moving to questions which will be answered by a broader panel of ISAG members. **The Press Conference and Public Meeting will be chaired by Prof. Aoife McLysaght.**