

## #SundayWiMIN23 Week 21: Dr Ciara McCarthy

Dr Ciara McCarthy is a GP in Cork city and the current ICGP/HSE GP Clinical Lead in Women's Health.

Born and raised in Waterford by Cork native parents, Ciara graduated from University College Cork in 2008. Following a year of work and travel in New Zealand, she completed Basic Specialist Training in Paediatrics with the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland during which she obtained membership of the Royal College of Physicians Ireland (RCPI). She then went on to complete GP Specialist Training with the Cork GP Training Scheme, obtaining her membership of the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) as well as a Diploma in Obstetrics and Women's Health from the RCPI. It was during registrar years that her interest in women's health was piqued, and she completed advanced certificates in contraception and long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs) during these years.

On completing GP training in January 2017, Ciara began work as a GP in a large suburban practice in Cork city suburbs and remains there to date. She has a special interest in women's health and has expanded her knowledge base by completing post-graduate courses in menopause care and community gynaecology. She also acts as a LARC trainer for the practice.

In March 2022, Ciara took up the role of ICGP/HSE Clinical Lead in Women's Health. She developed an interest in delivering GP education in her role as LARC tutor, and also as an Early Medical Abortion Trainer. Following repeal of the Eighth Amendment, she was a founding member of START (Southern Taskforce on Abortion and Reproductive Topics). This group had significant input into the development of the model of abortion care in place in Ireland, and this piqued an interest in the importance of GPs being at the heart of healthcare policy development.

Her role as GP Clinical Lead in Women's Health is diverse, covering topics such as contraception, menopause, fertility care, endometriosis, termination of pregnancy, and antenatal care. She works closely with the National Women and Infants Health Programme in the HSE to ensure that the voice of GPs and the patients they represent are front and centre. The ICGP are motivated to continue to deliver high quality education in women's health, and in the last year have updated menopause, contraceptive and LARC education. Locally Ciara serves on the CUMH GP Liaison Committee which acts as a critical sounding board for issues arising for GPs in the areas of obstetrics and gynaecology.

Ciara's role as GP Lead in Women's Health would not be possible without the endless support of her husband Paul (a fellow 2008 UCC Medicine graduate), and her three little 'WiMIN'. Her three daughters motivate her to strive for accessible, high-quality healthcare for women right throughout the life course. The last number of years have seen huge advances in women's healthcare in Ireland, with the introduction of free contraception and abortion care, but there is always more to do! In her downtime she enjoys pilates, baking and the company of cherished family and friends.