

Evening Echo

ECHONEWS

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New bid to tackle our rising suicide rate

A NEW scheme aimed at tackling depression and suicide — which proved hugely successful in Germany — will be rolled out in Cork today.

Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr Seán Martin is the patron of the new initiative, called 'The Cork and Kerry's Alliance for Awareness of Depression and Suicidal Behaviour'.

The scheme, which centres on community intervention, is also being implemented in 15 other re-

gions across Europe. It will focus on measures to tackle depression and suicide through general practitioners (GPs), acute patient groups, community facilitators and the general public.

Over the next two years:

- GPs will be invited to participate in specialist workshops focusing on working with depressed and suicidal patients.

- There will be increased support for acute groups, including deliber-

ate self-harm patients through, for example, an 'emergency card' and leaflet which will provide information on relevant services, and through providing support for self-help groups working in the area.

- Community facilitators, such as social workers, priests, police, teachers and journalists, will be informed about depression and suicidal behaviour and offered workshops.

- The general public will also be addressed through an awareness cam-

paign using posters, information leaflets, cinema adverts and public lectures. The aim is to improve the knowledge about and attitudes towards depression and suicidal behaviour.

The scheme, which is supported by the European Alliance Against Depression, the Health Research Board of Ireland, the Irish College of General Practitioners, the Health Service Executive Southern, Mid-Western and South Eastern areas and Uni-

versity College Cork, will be launched today at a special seminar, called 'Depression and Suicidal Behaviour: A multi-disciplinary approach', in the Gresham Metropole Hotel, MacCurtain St, Cork.

- Anyone seeking help in relation to depression or suicide should contact the following helplines: Samaritans: 1850 60 90 90, Childline: 1800 666 666, Aware: 1890 303 302 or the Suicide Helpline HSE Southern Area (6 to 10pm) on 1800 742 745.