



## Belfast Healthy Cities Seminar studies the Economics of Health



*Belfast Healthy Cities welcomed speakers Donal Rogan, Belfast City Council, Deputy Chief Medical Officer Dr Paddy Woods and Professor David Stuckler, Oxford University, pictured with Chair of Seminar, John McMullan, Chief Executive, Bryson Charitable Group and member of Belfast Healthy Cities board.*

A seminar looking at 'The Economics of Health.' was hosted today by Belfast Healthy Cities, the World Health Organization body in Northern Ireland. Speakers included representatives from Titanic Quarter, the Belfast Health Trust and Professor David Stuckler from Oxford University who will address the links between economic policy and public wellbeing. The Deputy Chief Medical Officer Dr Paddy Woods opened the seminar.

Belfast Healthy Cities Chief Executive Joan Devlin said the event, part of a series supported by the Public Health Agency, highlighted the links between health and the economy.

“There is a clear link between a thriving economy and a healthy population. While investment in jobs is essential to create a sustainable city, investment in health is equally important and can play a role in creating a successful economy. This seminar focused on the impact of economic policy on health inequalities, exploring the incentives for and co-benefits of an integrated approach.

“All of the economic indicators suggest that Belfast is in the early stages of an upturn, with an increased level of investment and jobs. A healthier population will contribute to a more sustainable economic wellbeing. This event was very timely.”

Dr Paddy Woods said

“A healthy population spurs economic growth. When a population is economically productive the dread of spiraling into debt can be lifted. People enjoy a better standard of living and a greater sense of wellbeing, bringing greater confidence in spending, which benefits the economy. A healthy population also reduces the burden on the health service, and on the wider economy. The links between health and the economy are clear and they are two-way and form a central part of the agenda of DHSSPS.

The health sector is also a major employer. We need to ensure that the HSC acts as a “health-promoting” employer in the widest sense, offering the working conditions and opportunities as being protective of health.