



Príomhoifigeach Cliniciúil
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BY EMAIL ONLY

Deputy Patrick Costello
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

15th August 2024

PQ19300/24-To ask the Minister for Health for an update regarding the recruitment of the outstanding nurses promised as part of the 2018 Valproate Response Project, for which funding was confirmed in 2022; if advertising of the positions and interviews have taken place; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Costello,

Thank you for your representation.

To give you some background the aim of the PREVENT programme is to provide both appropriate response to prior intrauterine exposures of sodium valproate to children of Women with Epilepsy (WWE) and creation of a coordinated programme which can ensure risk reduction for future exposure. Intrauterine valproate exposure is but one of a number of pharmaceutical agents of concern during pregnancy for WWE, and the wider neurology, psychiatry and maternal medicine communities.

To do this PREVENT needs to exist as a component of a broader programme to improve the health of WWE by cooperation between the Clinical Programme for Epilepsy and NWIHP. Central to the initial valproate response was the introduction of Advance Nurse Practitioner posts, which reside within acute hospitals linked with the Epilepsy programme to provide a point of contact and counselling for WWE, ensure documentation of risk acknowledgement and exist as a resource for communication for clinicians outside of the Epilepsy and Neurology Programmes (i.e. General Practitioners and Psychiatrists etc.)

Since the initiation of PREVENT our understanding of the needs for Women With Epilepsy has evolved. In this context, a Model of Care (MoC) was developed not only supporting the further roll out of the PREVENT programme but also the development of a structured and resourced clinical network of services. These new clinical structures and resources were designed to lead on the identification and mitigation of clinical risks whilst increasing clinical capacity in our neurology hubs and our tertiary women's health services for WWE.

Central to this MoC is the creation and appointment of nursing and consultant physician roles to generate and embed a structured clinical link between the general medical/neurology services and the tertiary maternity services for the 6 maternity networks nationally.



The first of these appointments (medical and nursing) have been created in Cork University Hospital and Cork University Maternity Hospitals. The HSE are exploring resourcing options to phase the roll out of this model which includes ANPs.

I hope this provides you with some assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sharon Hayden', written in a cursive style.

Sharon Hayden
General Manager
Office of the Chief Clinical Officer