



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte
Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin Baile Phámar Baile Átha Cliath20.
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22nd January 2019

Deputy Pearse Doherty TD
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street
Dublin 2.

PQ 2837/19 Question: To ask the Minister for Health if parental alienation syndrome is recognised by the HSE and other statutory health and social care bodies and agencies; if not, his plans to have the syndrome recognised; the clinical and other pathways available to those affected by the condition in order to avail of appropriate supports and treatments; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Pearse Doherty

Dear Deputy Doherty,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Parental alienation is a controversial entity originally described by James Gardner in 1985. It is not recognised as a clinical entity by the American Psychiatric Association in their classification of mental health disorders, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders (DSM), the most recent iteration of which was published in 2013, that is, DSM-V. Nor is it recognised by the World Health Organisation in their standard diagnostic tool, the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD), most recently updated in 2018 as ICD-11.

The focus of the HSE is on providing care for internationally recognised conditions using the best available evidence. In the last ten years in mental health this has been supported by the development of the National Clinical Programmes, a means of standardising high quality care across the country, and by the development of service improvement projects. These use well-recognised change methodology to ensure that they are introduced in a sustainable way. It is planned to continue the introduction these in mental health in the coming years and these will be based on international best practice aligned with service need.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sinead Reynolds'.

Sinead Reynolds
General Manager Mental Health Services

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