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Date: 5th June 2020

Deputy Brendan Smith TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ No. 4210/20 To ask the Minister for Health his plans regarding the appointment of much needed additional Parkinson's nurse specialists in view of the fact there are only two such nurse specialists in the 25 counties outside Dublin; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Smith,

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.

Response:

I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Currently in Ireland, there are 5 Parkinson Disease Nurses attached to acute Neurology centers

- University Hospital Limerick, – 1 post
- St Vincent's University Hospital, Dublin – 1 post
- Tallaght University Hospital, Dublin– 1 post
- Mater Hospital, Dublin – 1 post
- Galway University Hospital – 1 post

Additionally in 2018, funding was provided for a coordinated, multidisciplinary All Island Deep Brain Stimulation service for Parkinson's disease, based in the Mater Hospital, Dublin which includes a Consultant Neurologist post (0.5WTE); a Psychologist (1WTE); a speech and language therapist (1WTE); a Physiotherapists (0.5WTE); and an administrator (1WTE). This service is staffed and operational.

The Neurology National Clinical Programme's overarching aim is that patients should have equitable access to a high-quality responsive service which provides accurate diagnosis and appropriate management for all neurological conditions including those with Parkinson's disease. The Model of Care for Neurology (2016) includes a care pathway for the management of persons with Parkinson's Disease which outlines the need for specialist care from a Multidisciplinary team in order to support the management of symptoms including mobility; functional independence; effective communication, swallowing etc.

Furthermore, the National Implementation Framework (2019-2021) for the National Strategy and Policy for the provision of Neuro-Rehabilitation Services in Ireland describes the fundamental principles of design and service delivery required to implement the strategy over the next 3 years. Developments as outlined in the implementation framework regarding community rehabilitation will be welcomed across the Republic of Ireland. It is well documented that maintaining wellbeing within community settings, near to the person's home is recommended as central to the management of conditions such as Parkinson's disease.

We acknowledge the need to continue the expansion of neurology services and continue to support the realisation of the Model of Care and the Neuro Rehabilitation Strategy for this population group and others.

I trust this answers your question to your satisfaction.

Yours sincerely,



Emma Benton

General Manager

Acute Operations