



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Office of the Chief Clinical Officer  
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Oifig an Phríomhoifigigh Cliniciúil  
Ospidéal Dr Steevens|Lána Steevens|Baile Átha Cliath 8|D08 W2A8

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

**Deputy Michael Fitzmaurice**

Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

04/10/2021

**PQ 45108-21- Deputy Michael Fitzmaurice – To ask the Minister for Health when the six epilepsy nurse specialists will be recruited for the pregnancy prevention programme to help ensure pregnant women are fully informed of the side effects of sodium valproate given that to date only two of these nurses have been put in place; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Fitzmaurice,

Thank you for your representation. Foetal valproate syndrome (FVS) is a recognised clinical condition and diagnostic criteria has been developed to assist in identifying it. Where children or adults have been exposed to valproate in utero, there is concern that they may have FVS, either because of the presence of congenital malformations, or a developmental disorder. To date there has been two advanced nurse practitioners appointed as part of the pregnancy prevent programme. In addition to create capacity in the service, the HSE focused on setting up an dedicated FVS diagnostic clinics, prioritising patients where there is a referral with a query of FVS. The capacity building exercise included the funding and the appointment of a 5.8wte posts which included a Consultant Paediatrician, Consultant Geneticist, Administration Support, Laboratory Geneticist, Advanced nurse practitioner posts and a data manager. In addition the HSE has sought funding for the remaining 4 advanced nurse practitioners as part of the 2022 new service development process

I hope this provides you with assistance.

Yours sincerely,

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Sharon Hayden  
General Manager  
Office of the CCO