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**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Deputy Patrick Costello  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

3<sup>rd</sup> January 2023

**PQ 61491/22-Deputy Patrick Costello - To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide an update on the recruitment of the outstanding epilepsy nurse specialists agreed in 2018 as part of the valproate response project; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Costello,

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.

There have been two advanced nurse practitioners appointed as part of the pregnancy prevent programme. In addition the HSE set up a dedicated FVS diagnostic clinic, prioritising patients who need an assessment for 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, the two advanced nurse practitioner posts and a data manager.

In addition there has been funding made available to progress the appointment of an additional Advanced Nurse Practitioner in Cork. Funding has been granted for the remaining three advanced nurse practitioners posts and these are being progressed through a recruitment process.

Yours sincerely

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Sharon Hayden  
General Manager  
Office of the Chief Clinical Officer