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Date: 11th August 2023

PQ – 34056/23

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan
Dail Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

To ask the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability; Integrations and Youth the plans to advance paediatric neurology services in Cork and across CHO4; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Moynihan

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.

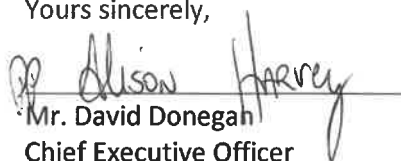
In terms of Cork University Hospital please see below in relation to the Paediatric Neurology Service.

- Paediatric Neurology Department within the Paediatric Directorate here at CUH has 1.6 WTE Consultant Paediatric Neurologists.
- Newly appointed a cANP for Epilepsy
- 2 WTE Epilepsy CNS, however a 3rd CNS posts remain vacant
- 820+ active epileptic patients on our books of which 30% of this cohort of patient would be in contact with the department on a daily basis due to the serious condition they have.
- 20+ patients on an extremely specialised ketogenic diet with no dedicated CNS assigned to this post.
- Over 150 phone calls are received on a weekly basis by the Epilepsy CNS – who have to attend anything up to 4 outpatient clinics per week
- Upon discharge from our inpatient ward with a new neurology diagnosis return patients should be seen within 6 weeks unfortunately due to the volume of patients on the books this is out as far as 6-9 months
- Access to services like a dedicated weekly MRI under GA service is not in place – progression being made in house with 3rd scanner coming on board – however a regional service is warranted.
- Access to urgent sedated MRI slots – waiting time 4-6 months
- In the last 4 years 9,392 patients have attended the Paediatric Neurology Outpatient Clinics – 1056 of which were new patients.

- Video Telemetry service halted due to serious short staffing issues with paediatric nursing (despite equipment being bought out of charity funding) resulting in huge waiting lists for sleep EEG's
- Cons. Paediatrician with SI in Neurodisability appointed in the last couple of years however workload of Paediatric Neurology remains the same
- Rapid Access Clinics and access to services like MRI and EEG not in place and need to be
- Due to recent resignation in UHL of Paediatric Neurologist (not replaced) – referrals now being received here in CUH
- Lack of Paediatric Neurology Psychology
- Increase in NCHD requested on a yearly basis – no response
- **RECENT CENSUS 2022**
- IN 2021 Ireland had the highest estimated proportion of children in the European Union 23.9/5, The EU average being 18.2%
- Population of Ireland: 5,006,324
- No of children per county
- Cork county 16,740
- Cork city 25,627
- Waterford 23,891
- Tipperary 33,990
- Kerry 28,850
- **No of children with disability/ total children (1,190,502) FIGURES FROM 2015**
- Cork city 1755/21590 81.3%
- Cork county 7361/12425
- Kerry 2271/34527 65.8%
- Tipperary 2706/40764 66.4%
- Waterford 1801/29347 61.4%
- Critical to the success of the National Childrens Hospital is the adequate resourcing of local and regional care to prevent a “magnet effect” levels of patient traffic which would overwhelm NCH.
- Cork has been identified as a hub for regional care supporting smaller local units.
- There are 2 WTE Paediatric Neurologists (one 0.6 in Mercy University Hospital). The Model of care 2014 identified that Cork should have at least 3 Paediatric Neurologists.
- **Subspecialty Clinics held here**
- Complex Epilepsy
- Epilepsy
- Neuromuscular (Enable Ireland every 3/12, all day clinic)
- Paediatric Stroke
- Neonatal Stroke
- Transition (recent appointment of ASPIRE Fellow and planned joint clinics with Dr Aine Merwick)
- Neurogenetics (in development, currently counselling done wither part of an existing clinic or separate time outside of clinics)
- General Neurology
- NICU consults (1 -2 per week)
- Neonatal Neurology clinic (monthly)

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,


Mr. David Donegan
Chief Executive Officer