08 February 2019

Mr Colm Murphy
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Your reference no. M02/0418

Dear Mr Murphy

The Minister for Health, Simon Harris, T.D., has asked me to thank you for your recent letter concerning neurology.

The National Neuro-Rehabilitation Strategy, published in 2011, made a number of recommendations in respect of services for people with rehabilitation needs, including clinical, therapeutic, social, vocational and community supports. Since then the HSE established a Rehabilitation Medicine Programme which aims to ensure the optimal care pathway for different clinical needs.

This Programme provides a national, strategic, and coordinated approach to a wide range of clinical services and includes the standardisation of access to and delivery of high quality, safe and efficient hospital services nationally as well as better linkages with primary care services. The scope of the Programme covers the whole of the patient journey from self-management and prevention through to primary, secondary and tertiary care.

The Model of Care for Neurology was launched by the HSE in late 2016. This was developed by the HSE’s National Clinical Programme for Neurology in collaboration with consultants, nurses, health and social care professionals and patient support groups. It aims to address the need for strategic development of neurology services in the provision of better care for these patients.

As part of the HSE National Service Plan 2018, there was significant investment for the diagnosis and treatment of a number of neurology related conditions. In the Ireland East Hospital Group, funding was allocated to commence the development of peri- and post-operative services to support patients with Parkinson's Disease receiving Deep Brain Stimulation. Also, additional funding was allocated to the Dublin Midlands Hospital Group to further develop the national narcolepsy services, in particular the transition of adolescents from Children's University Hospital to St. James's Hospital.

As part of the HSE National Service Plan 2019, The HSE plans to commence a pilot project in CHO 6 and 7 to support the roll-out of the National Policy and Strategy for the Provision of Neuro-Rehabilitation Services in Ireland 2011-2015. In addition, the HSE plans to appoint an advanced nurse practitioner to the paediatric neurosurgery service in the Children’s Health Ireland (Temple Street).

Other improvements across neurology services include the development of nurse led clinics, condition specific outpatient clinics and the development of links across specialties including stroke, old age medicine and genetics.

The Department of Health will continue to work with the HSE to support implementation of the Model of Care for Neurology as implementation progresses, and the continuing development of neurological services.

Yours sincerely

Paula Smeaton
Private Secretary
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