



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

National Population Health Directorate
Health Service Executive HQ
Oak House, Lime Tree Avenue
Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare

Tel: 045 882 520 Fax: 1890 200 893

14th March 2008.

Deputy James Reilly TD.
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House,
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: Parliamentary Question – 8310/08

To ask the Minister for Health and Children if, in view of the recommendations of the Report of the National Task Force on Obesity, the proposed growth assessment for underweight or overweight children has introduced nationally; the regularity with which assessments are carried out; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

- James Reilly

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which was forwarded to the Health Service Executive Parliamentary Affairs Division for attention.

The HSE has developed an action plan to implement the recommendations of the Task Force Report which will be signed off shortly by the HSE Obesity implementation group and Senior Management in the HSE. All elements of the action plan are targeted at the whole population and specific sub populations i.e. children, young people as required, are evidence based, include process, impact and outcome evaluation and include needs assessment and stakeholder involvement at all stages. The HSE is also developing systems to measure cost effectiveness of interventions and return on investment. The HSE has commissioned research on progress made across all sectors in implementing the recommendations of the Task Force Report. This research will be available later this year.

Obesity Progress - Annual Report 2007

The HSE National Working Group on Obesity are progressing the implementation of the recommendations of the National Taskforce on Obesity relevant to the HSE. An action plan was developed, to be published in Spring 2008. The following areas of work have been progressed:

Funding provided for reprinting of nutrition and physical activity resources

Distributed a range of health promotion materials and resources to schools, workplaces, general public, GP;s, Health Centres etc throughout the country to ensure information is readily access to all stakeholders.

Dietetic services continue to be provided and enhanced. Commenced a HSE Multidisciplinary pilot weight management programme (ACE) for overweight children in the midlands region.

Increased physical activity and nutrition programmes throughout the country.



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Continued to provide health promotion programmes in nutrition/physical activity and support development of healthy policies in pre-schools, schools, communities and workplaces
Training provided to a broad range of healthcare staff, community and voluntary sector, teachers on nutrition and physical activity

Breastfeeding action plan progressed

Provided community nutrition and food projects in disadvantaged areas.

The HSE has funded the National Nutrition Surveillance centre (NNSC) to undertake Ireland's first National growth surveillance of 6yr old school going children on behalf of the HSE. This is part of a WHO European Childhood Growth Surveillance Initiative, which aims to measure routinely trends in overweight and obesity in primary school children using standardized protocol. Final protocols have been agreed, the nationally representative sample of primary schools has been selected, equipment sourced and a team are in place to commence measurement on April 7th 2008.

Tertiary treatment services continue to be provided for adults and children in Loughlinstown, Cork, Crumlin and Galway hospitals.

Obesity Management programme has commenced for morbidly obese clients examining the effectiveness of using a cognitive behaviour therapy model for obese adults in primary care settings.

A review of the status of the National Taskforce recommendations has been undertaken. The results will be published later this year A literature review of best practice in surveillance of height and weight and planning for the first national Childhood Growth Surveillance Initiative will commence in April '08.

The HSE has jointly funded research undertaken by the Irish Universities Nutritional Alliance on determinants of food and nutrition in children and its determinants. The final report is awaited.

" Obesity Prevention: Getting Health Promotion Evidence into Practice" was completed. This NUIG report is a review of existing international programmes, evaluates evidence of effectiveness and forms the basis for future best practice.

The Irish Heart Foundation has completed research funded by the HSE on marketing foods to children on behalf of the HSE. Final report due 2008

An obesity prevention campaign has been planned and will roll out in May 2008.

Planning for an all Ireland conference on obesity and Childhood Growth Surveillance took place in 2007 and will be held in 2008.

Ongoing funding of the Community Games Association-Health Promotion included in strategic plan as a priority. 200 free places provided at May Finals to disadvantaged children to encourage participation in physical activity.

Funded Irish Sports Council to support Local Sports Partnerships,

Funded the Irish Heart Foundation to undertake physical activity and nutrition programmes in



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schools, workplaces and restaurants.

Funded the Diabetes Federation to raise awareness on diabetes prevention and to provide information to the public on diabetes prevention.

Funded the National Nutritional Surveillance Centre to undertake key research in obesity prevention.

Ongoing partnership with the Dept. of Education and Science re the SPHE and health promoting schools programme and sponsored Young Social Innovator Awards to raise awareness on healthy lifestyles for young people.

Provided funding and technical support to Healthy Food for All, a multi agency initiative targeting food poverty.

Worked with Dept of Health & Children to progress the establishment of an inter-departmental forum to address the determinants of health.

Procurement process underway to purchase height and weight equipment for key staff in Primary Care.

Developed obesity management programme for overweight/obese children in Dublin Mid Leinster

Clinical services were expanded in Loughlinstown, Crumlin, Cork and Galway. Review commenced of services available for morbidly obese clients, this will address clinical governance issues and examine services available for management of obesity.

Worked with Dept of Education & Science to jointly manage SPHE Management committee and to progress Health Promoting Schools.

Worked with Irish Sports Council to fund and further develop physical activity programmes through Sports Partnerships.

Provided sponsorship to Community Games to incorporate health promotion into their strategic plan and to progress health promotion programmes throughout the organisation. 200 free places were provided to children in disadvantaged areas in 2007 for the May Festival of Sport to encourage participation by children in these areas. Healthy options were provided at Community Games National Finals. Guidelines were developed on healthy events for all counties.

I trust this answers your question, but if you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Patrick Doorley
National Director of Population Health