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25th July 2019

Deputy Stephen Donnelly
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2.

PQ Ref 30941/19 To ask the Minister for Health the estimated full year cost of implementing the National Maternity Strategy**

Dear Deputy Donnelly,

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.

The National Maternity Strategy is a 10-year plan, and funding to support its implementation will be introduced across the lifetime of the plan.

€2m additional funding was provided in 2015, and a further €3m was provided in 2016. This funding has been used to support a number of priority developments in maternity hospitals/units across the country, including:

- 100 additional midwives, as recommended by the Birth Rate Plus report;
- 15 bereavement counsellors, to support families after perinatal death, or traumatic event;
- Additional consultant obstetricians, neonatologists, perinatal pathologist and perinatal psychiatrist to enable the establishment of the managed clinical network between the Coombe Women and Infants' University Hospital and Portlaoise Hospital, within the Dublin Midlands Hospital Group. Other support staffs were also appointed.
- Funding to support the implementation of the Maternity and Newborn Clinical Management System.

In 2017, €6.8m was provided to the Programme, which covered the full year costs of 2016 recruitment.

The funding priorities for 2017 included:

- Supporting increased access to anomaly scanning;
- Financial support to facilitate establishment of the managed clinical maternity networks in each hospital Group;
- Establishment of quality and patient safety resource in each managed clinical maternity network.

The NWIHP was allocated €4.55m in development funding for 2018. This funding is being used to address the following areas:

- Anomaly scanning; each hospital group was asked to identify how many additional ultrasonographers are required to ensure that 100% of women presenting at each maternity hospital/unit can be offered an anomaly scan. An additional 28 posts have been approved.
- Model of Care; the model of care is about providing women with informed choice regarding the care pathway they choose for their pregnancy. The specialised and assisted models are well established, and the Programme's focus is on implementing the supported care pathway. A multidisciplinary Implementation Group was established in April 2018 alongside nine subgroup workstreams. The aim of the Implementation Group is for 20% of pregnant women to be offered access to supported care pathway by quarter 1 of 2019. An additional 77 Midwives have been approved for 2018 to support the implementation of the supported care pathway.
- Quality and Safety; the Programme has provided each maternity network with funding to support a quality and safety manager for women and infants which will support the function of a Serious Incident Management Forum (SIMF) within each Maternity Network.
- Benign Gynaecology; €400,000 of the €4.55m funding provided to the NWIHP was allocated to the South/South West Hospital Group for the development of Benign Gynaecology services.

Whilst no additional development funding was allocated to the Programme for 2019, an additional €4.1m was allocated to cover the costs of 2018 developments. The total estimated cost of the implementation of the National Maternity Strategy is approximately €75 million over the 10 year plan.

Since 2015 an additional €20.45m has been allocated to maternity services.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



Kilian McGrane
National Programme Director, National Women and Infants Health Programme