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30th June 2020

Deputy Smyth,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 10906/20 To ask the Minister for Health if he will continue to support the National Maternity Strategy 2016 commitment to develop more midwifery-led units in line with best international evidence to provide effective, cost-efficient care and choice for women; and if the Taoiseach will confirm his continued interest in the strategy as articulated at the launch of the strategy.

Dear Deputy Smyth,

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.

As set out in a response to an earlier parliamentary question, the focus of the HSE's National Women and Infants Health Programme is on the development of home-away-from-home delivery suites within the maternity services. There is currently an active working programme in place in relation to the development of these suites across the country, with six services already having such facilities in place, with a further five actively developing them.

The provision of these delivery suites, in parallel with the on-going development of midwifery provided care in the community at the antenatal and postnatal stage of care are core to delivering on the key objectives of the National Maternity Strategy particularly with respect to greater continuity of care.

The HSE and the NWIHP remain committed to the National Maternity Strategy and will continue to work closely with all 19 maternity services so as to drive the Model of Care as recommended in the Strategy.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mary-Jo Biggs, General Manager, National Women and Infants Health Programme