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Deputy David Cullinane, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 21350/20

To ask the Minister for Health the diabetes preventive strategies in place here; the annual cost of funding the strategies; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in relation to the above parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have consulted with the National Clinical Programme for Diabetes on your question and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

Diabetes Prevention for those in the pre-diabetes phase

The Model of Integrated Care for Patients with Type 2 Diabetes (HSE, 2018) recommends screening for diabetes in asymptomatic patients who are at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes (T2DM). This 'case finding' or screening will be delivered as part of the Chronic Disease Management Programme introduced as a component of the GP Contractual Reforms (2019).

When patients are screened for T2DM, there are three possible outcomes: the person is diagnosed with T2DM; they do not have T2DM; or they are identified as being in pre-diabetes phase, which encompasses both impaired fasting glucose (IFG) and impaired glucose tolerance (IGT). Studies have shown that patients with IFG or IGT, or both, can significantly reduce their risk of developing Type 2 diabetes by following intensive lifestyle modification programmes (Lindstrom et al., 2003). They should be given advice on how to follow a healthy lifestyle, incorporating education on diet; physical activity; behaviour change; smoking cessation; reducing their alcohol intake and managing other cardiovascular risk factors such as hypertension and dyslipidaemia.

The National Clinical Programme (NCP) for Diabetes recognises the importance of developing a targeted Diabetes Prevention Programme, incorporating all of the elements outlined above, for those individuals with laboratory tests indicating pre-diabetes. In 2019, an application to the Sláintecare Integration Fund to progress development of a National Diabetes Prevention Programme

was successful. This project commenced in January 2020 but was paused during the COVID-19 pandemic. The NCP for Diabetes is preparing to recommence this project in the coming months.

The amount that the health service spends on diabetes prevention is currently difficult to calculate. However, the National Clinical Programme (NCP) for Diabetes recognises the importance of developing a co-ordinated approach to diabetes prevention nationally and this is reflected in the work of the Office of the National Clinical Advisor and Group Lead for Chronic Disease.

Diabetes Prevention for the wider population

There are a number of programmes and strategies in place across the HSE that focus on type 2 diabetes preventive strategies across the wider population:

- The Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Programme whose remit is to mobilise the health services to improve health and wellbeing by increasing the levels of physical activity, healthy diet and healthier weight across services users, staff and the population as a whole, with a focus on families and children. Programme Team members work to coordinate and lead activity across the health services to ensure implementation of the 'Healthy Weight for Ireland: Obesity Policy and Action Plan 2016 - 2025' and the 'National Physical Activity Plan: Get Ireland Active'. The Department of Health - Health and Wellbeing Programme have regular engagement with HSE HEAL through both the Strategic Action Group on Obesity and the National Physical Activity Plan – Cross-sectoral Implementation Group as well as the annual service planning and performance monitoring processes.
- The HSE is required by statute (Health Acts 1947-2013) to manage and deliver or arrange to have delivered on its behalf health and personal social services. Through this work the HSE's Health and Wellbeing division supports a number of Section 38 and Section 39 agencies that aid the management of obesity and T2DM including agencies and organisations for programmes that contribute to achieving the objectives of the 'Healthy Weight for Ireland: Obesity Policy and Action Plan 2016 - 2025', in particular around the areas of breastfeeding support and promotion, increasing opportunities for participation in health enhancing physical activity and community based health promotion.
- The Nurture Programme is a new programme of work designed to improve the information and professional supports provided to parents during pregnancy and the first three years of their baby's life. It is a partnership between the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Atlantic Philanthropies, the Katharine Howard Foundation (KHF) and the Centre for Effective Services. The aim of The Nurture Programme is to support parents and healthcare professionals in their respective caring and service provision roles. The Nurture Programme is integrated with and delivered through the National Healthy Childhood Programme.
- Through the HSE's National Healthy Childhood Programme every child will have at least 22 contacts with the health service, from pregnancy to 5 years of age. This includes the two health and wellbeing checks introduced as part of the GP under-6 contract. The focus of the programme is on prevention and early intervention. Early intervention and prevention has a positive impact on children's health, social and educational development and offers the best chance of living a happy and fulfilled life.
- The Making Every Contact Count Programme is designed to equip all health professionals with the knowledge and skills to engage patients and service users in a brief intervention on

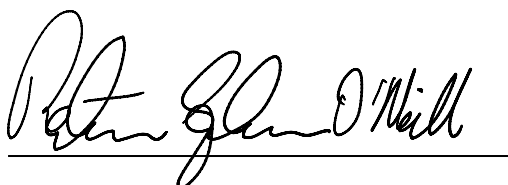
healthy lifestyles with the aim of prompting action to change behaviour. The core lifestyle behaviours addressed are physical activity, healthy eating, smoking and alcohol.

Some other key elements of work across the health services that support better prevention of childhood obesity and also T2DM include:

- Training to increase health professional's knowledge, skills and confidence to integrate growth monitoring as part of routine care, have conversations with parents about their child's growth and assist parents with setting goals and taking steps to help their child's healthy growth.
- Mychild.ie: a comprehensive source of quality assured information on child health and wellbeing for parents.
- The START campaign, delivered in partnership by Safefood, HSE and Healthy Ireland, seeks to embed key health behaviours that support healthy weight in all families and communities.
- Community based initiatives such as Community Cooking Programmes, a six-week nutrition and basic cooking course run in different areas around the country. These courses are delivered by tutors who have been trained by HSE community dietitians. They are fun and interactive and a valuable opportunity to learn more about food and nutrition.
- Healthy Ireland Smart Start: This Pre-school Health Promotion training programme is the result of over a decade of collaborative working led by the HSE Department of Health Promotion and Improvement in partnership with National Childhood Network, to ensure children in the pre-school settings are supported to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviours in early childhood. The Training Programme reflects the aim of the Healthy Ireland Framework to bring all people together into a national movement with a single aim to ensure the best possible health and well-being of our nation.

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



Patricia Gilsenan O'Neill
General Manager