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Deputy Mick Barry
Dail Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

18th September 2020

PQ ref 22047/20

Question: To ask the Minister for Health his plans to provide information regarding PrEP and U=U in information campaigns on HIV prevention including television and billboard advertising; and if he will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy Barry,

Thank you for your question to the Minister for Health, which was forwarded to my office to respond to you directly.

HIV Stigma Campaign

The HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme (SHCPP) in partnership with NGOs developed a national HIV Stigma Campaign which was launched in January 2020. Campaign posters had the tagline: 'Effective treatment means you can't pass HIV onto partners' and referenced the global U=U campaign (undetectable equals untransmittable).

Between the 27th of January and the 9th February 2020, the national campaign appeared on public transport, bus shelters, social venues and college locations across the country. The campaign was also advertised on social media platforms.

Phase 2 of the HIV Stigma/U=U campaign had been planned for summer 2020 but has been postponed until 2021 due to Covid-19. For phase 2 of the HIV Stigma/U=U campaign, the SHCPP will collaborate with community partners to provide targeted messages for migrant groups and gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men.

PrEP Information Campaign

In November 2019, HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) became available through the HSE, free of charge, for those at substantial risk for HIV. The HSE SHCPP launched a

national 'Get Ready for PrEP' social media campaign in October 2019, followed by a 'Get Prep' social media campaign, once the programme had started. The campaign was advertised through social media channels and signposted people to the HSE website www.sexualwellbeing.ie/prep for information on PrEP, eligibility and how to access the medication.

HIV/STI prevention communications, campaigns and outreach

The HSE SHCPP promotes HIV and STI prevention messages via social media on an ongoing basis. These messages relate to condom use and regular HIV/STI testing and are directed towards young adults and gay and bisexual men who are more likely to be impacted by HIV and STIs. During the Covid-19, these messages focussed on highlighting HIV/STI testing service restrictions and promoting condom use.

The SHCPP recently ran a new sexual health campaign in partnership with the Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU). Sexual health protection packs were made available in pharmacies which included an information leaflet and a free HSE condom. The leaflet directs people to www.sexualwellbeing.ie for further information about their sexual health and wellbeing, and advises that they speak to their pharmacist if they have queries about their sexual health. The campaign was supported by social media messages directed at young adults.

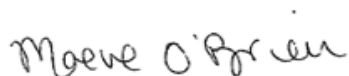
The 'Because...' campaign is another HSE led campaign that promotes consistent condom use as a protection against unplanned pregnancies and STIs and aims normalise discussions around sexual health and wellbeing. The campaign has been running since November 2019 and appears across multiple channels, including posters in colleges and social venues and digital posters are placed in high-footfall areas.

The SHCPP also works in partnership with the Gay Health Network on the man2man.ie website and issues messages via appropriate social media channels; and funds the MPOWER Programme, HIV Ireland's peer-driven outreach programme which aims to achieve a reduction in the acquisition of HIV and STIs and an overall improvement of sexual health and wellbeing among gay, bisexual and men who have sex with men (gbMSM).

<https://www.sexualwellbeing.ie/for-professionals/research/research-reports/msm%20outreach%20logic%20model.pdf>

The HSE SHCPP will continue to promote all aspects of HIV and STI prevention campaign messaging across its digital platforms in 2020 and 2021.

Yours Sincerely



Maeve O'Brien

Interim Programme Lead
Sexual Health & Crisis Pregnancy Programme