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Deputy Alan Farrell, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 59876/21

To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the fact that there is currently an eighteen month wait for insulin pumps for children over five years of age who have type 1 diabetes; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Farrell,

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 Children on your question and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

The decision to prescribe a pump is made based on the clinical needs of a child with diabetes. Commencing a child on an insulin pump safely requires hands-on training and ongoing support as both the child and family need to acquire complex skills. This training requires access to a trained multidisciplinary team (a consultant with training in paediatric type 1 diabetes, a paediatric diabetes nurse specialist, a paediatric dietitian and mental health support).

Delays in accessing insulin pump therapy may occur where there are staffing limitations. When staffing is limited, the education of newly diagnosed children who present as emergencies has to be prioritised and the more elective work of moving children established on insulin injections to pump technology is subject to waiting lists.

While insulin pump therapy is usually the best option for a child with diabetes, this is not universally the case. Some children and families choose not to use insulin pumps.

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

Anne Horgan
General Manager