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22nd December 2021

Deputy Wynne,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ62038/21: To ask the Minister for Health if he plans to extend the number of maternity services through primary centres when they are developed across the county.

Dear Deputy Wynne,

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.

Using the feedback from the National Maternity Survey, NWIHP identified that although women were satisfied with the care received in the antenatal and intrapartum period of their pregnancy, women were dissatisfied with care/support received in the postnatal period.

As per the 'Development of the Supported Care Pathway' baseline report in 2020, 17 of the 19 maternity services are providing 91 offsite midwifery led antenatal clinics across 59 locations in the community. <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/acute-hospitals-division/woman-infants/national-reports-on-womens-health/hse-scp-report.pdf>

One initiative that NWIHP is reviewing in order to address the service gap in the postnatal period is the establishment of 'Postnatal Hubs' in the community. The concept of the community hub is that it is a local centre where women can access various elements of their maternity care. These will include perinatal mental health, lactation support, postnatal education, dietitian service, etc.

Design work will continue in early 2022, and it is anticipated that a number of postnatal hubs will be established in late 2022.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

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