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Deputy David Cullinane
Dail Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2
26th February 2021

PQ ref: 8481/21

Question: To ask the Minister for Health the current resources allocated to STI home testing kits; his plans to increase same; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Deputy Cullinane,

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

The HSE Sexual Health & Crisis Pregnancy Programme (SHCPP) is leading a pilot home STI testing service for people living in Dublin, Cork and Kerry, which will assess the feasibility, acceptability and cost-effectiveness of an online STI service integrated with public STI clinics in Ireland.

This pilot project was funded in part Government of Ireland's Sláintecare Integration Fund 2019 under Grant Agreement Number ID57. The remaining balance was covered by the SHCPP's budget allocation.

In light of the significant public interest in ensuring that the State, through the HSE, can continue to negotiate better terms with providers, (which reduces the overall cost of funding services and make funds available for other health services); the limited number of service providers; the need to preserve confidentiality in contract negotiations; and the public interest in entities being able to conduct commercial transactions without fear of suffering commercially as a result, the SHCPP is not in a position to release commercially sensitive information relating to the actual cost of this service.

However, we can advise you that the associated Request for Tender document published in February 2020 provided a maximum budget threshold of €505,000, to pilot this service across the three counties over 12 months. The RFT called for the establishment of an online platform, the delivery of the pilot project; clinical governance and results management; and a full academic evaluation.

The pilot project and the evaluation will be completed by the end of 2021 and will provide valuable information to inform decision-making in relation to future service provision.

Yours Sincerely

Maeve O'Brien

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Interim Programme Lead

Sexual Health & Crisis Pregnancy Programme