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April 08<sup>th</sup> 2021

Deputy Whitmore,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ Ref 17399/21: To ask the Minister for Health the status of the efforts undertaken by his Department to date to provide breast milk banks in Ireland; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Whitmore,

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.

The HSE is committed to maintaining the supply of donor expressed breast milk (DEBM) to sick or preterm babies when on occasion their mothers are unable to produce sufficient breast milk for their needs.

All maternity and children's hospitals have clinical guidelines relating to the care of sick and pre term babies and the prioritisation of DEBM. DEBM is available in all hospitals providing care to these babies.

The HSE has a national purchasing contract in place with the Western Health & Social Care Trust Human Milk Bank based in Enniskillen. The HSE is monitoring the provision of donor human milk to hospitals to ensure a continuous supply is available to sick and pre terms babies. The HSE does not currently have plans to establish and operate a human milk bank in the Republic of Ireland.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary-Jo Biggs'.

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