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2nd June 2022

Deputy Smyth,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 25143/22: To ask the Minister for Health the estimated full-year cost to ensure that every woman has full choice-of-care and delivery options when pregnant, to include midwife-led care.

Dear Deputy Smyth,

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.

In describing the Model of Care, the National Maternity Strategy classifies pregnant women/babies into three risk groups; normal risk, medium risk (requiring a higher level of oversight) and high risk (requiring a more intensive level of care, either throughout or at a particular stage of care). A choice of pathway of maternity care will be available to women based on this risk profile thereby enabling women to see the most appropriate professional based on their clinical need.

For women/babies classified as normal risk, the availability of the supported care pathway as provided by a community based midwifery service within a multidisciplinary framework is recommended. As set out in the Strategy, within this pathway, responsibility for the co-ordination of care to a woman will be assigned to a named Clinical Midwife Manager, and care will be delivered by the community midwifery team, with most antenatal and postnatal care being provided in the community and home settings.

The development of the supported care pathway, within maternity services was reviewed across the 19 maternity services via a structured baseline assessment exercise. As of May 2021, all 19 maternity services in Ireland were offering the antenatal component of the supported care pathway to normal risk women, with other components of the care pathways continuing to being actively developed and deployed across the 19 maternity units.

Further information is available on the link below:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/acute-hospitals-division/woman-infants/national-reports-on-womens-health/hse-scp-report.pdf>

NWIHP continues to invest in maternity services from a specialist, midwifery and ANP perspective with a further 85 WTEs to be invested this year to drive the full implementation of the National Maternity Strategy.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



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