



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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Deputy Mark Ward,
Dail Eireann,
Dublin 2.

8th June 2022

PQ Number: 27246/22

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the facilities that perinatal mental health services currently have to hold clinics; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Mark Ward

Dear Deputy Ward,

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.

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The National Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Programme (SPMHS) Model of Care launched in November 2017. It is based on the maternity networks recommended in the National Maternity Strategy and aligned to hospital groups, developed in a 6 hub and 13 spoke format with all 19 maternity services included. Staffing for specialist perinatal mental health services increased from 4.0WTE (2017) to approximately 74.0WTE nationally (2022). The Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Teams based in each hub site (SPMHS) are led by a Consultant Perinatal Psychiatrist who has specific perinatal mental health training to support women usually with moderate to severe mental health problems who require this service. Both hub and spoke sites have Perinatal Mental Health Midwives who respond to women with mild to moderate mental health problems.

Areas to be addressed in 2022-2023 include appropriate accommodation for Hub site teams (in particular in the three HSE hub sites in UMHL, CUMH and GUH), and the development of Ireland's first Mother and Baby Unit.

The National Model of Care recommends that Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Teams are based in maternity hospitals with dedicated access to clinical space so that women receive appropriate mental health care alongside their physical healthcare needs. There are currently limited facilities available for perinatal mental health services to hold clinics, particularly in Limerick, Cork and Galway.

Links have been made over the last number of years with maternity hospitals and HSE Estates Services to work on solutions. A modular unit solution has been identified and costed by the Programme. All attempts to implement this in Galway, Cork and Limerick to date have not progressed. Hence, despite all clinical staff being in place it is not possible in particular in Galway, Limerick and Cork to meet the clinical needs of all women during this crucial period. Psychiatry consultations require appropriate therapeutic space for both the assessment and treatment of patients. Clinic consultations with patients can take a considerably longer period of time compared to other areas in health due to the nature of the work involved and treatment required. It is hoped that any new maternity hospital developments would incorporate appropriate team and clinical space for Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Services, this applies to UMHL and the National Maternity Hospital in particular.

I trust this information is of assistance to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Amir Niazi
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