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22<sup>nd</sup> December 2022

Deputy Burke  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ 59432/22: To ask the Minister for Health the level of expansion that he expects from each of the regional fertility hubs in 2023, 2024 and 2025; the level of staff that each hub will have; the number of patients each hub will treat; the fertility services that each will provide in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**PQ 59431/22: To ask the Minister for Health the number of the regional fertility hubs that are fully operational in November 2022; the number of patients who have been seen in each hub in the first nine months of 2022; the level of treatment that is provided by each hub; the number of staff in each hub in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Burke,

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.

A commitment to “introduce a publicly funded model of care for fertility treatment” is included in the Programme for Government. The Model of Care for Infertility was developed by the Department of Health in conjunction with the HSE’s National Women & Infants Health Programme (NWIHP) in order to ensure that infertility issues are addressed through the public health system at the lowest level of clinical intervention necessary. This Model of Care comprises three stages, starting in primary care (i.e., GPs) and extending into secondary care (i.e., Regional Infertility Hubs) and then, where necessary, tertiary care (i.e., IVF, and other advanced assisted human reproduction (AHR) treatments), with patients being referred onwards through structured pathways.

Phase One of the roll-out of the Model of Care has involved the establishment of Regional Infertility Hubs at secondary care level within the six maternity networks, in order to facilitate the management of a significant proportion of patients presenting with infertility issues at this level of intervention. The completion of Phase One of the roll-out will result in fully operational Regional Infertility Hubs in each of the six Regional Health Areas across the country.

Funding of €2m was provided to the HSE to commence Phase One of the roll-out in 2020 and this was utilised specifically in respect of the development of the first four Regional Infertility Hubs – namely, Cork University Maternity Hospital, the Rotunda Hospital, the National Maternity Hospital and the Coombe Women & Infants University Hospital. These four Hubs are currently operational and actively

expanding their services in line with the range service envisaged in the Model of Care at this level of intervention.

Additional funding was made available in Budget 2021 to enable the completion of Phase One in 2021, namely the approval and funding of the final two Regional Infertility Hubs, one located within the Saolta Hospital Group, at University Hospital Galway, which is now operational and one within the University of Limerick Hospital Group, at Nenagh General Hospital where it is anticipated that the hub will be operational by Q1 2023.

The status of the posts filled across the six Regional Infertility Hubs as of November 2022 is:

<b>Coombe Women &amp; Infants University Hospital</b>		
Consultant Obs & Gynae	0.5	Unfilled
Consultant Endocrinologist	0.3	Filled
Clinical Nurse Specialist	1.0	Filled
Clinical Nurse Specialist	1.0	Filled
Senior Medical Scientist	1.0	Unfilled
Administrator Grade IV	1.0	Filled
<b>National Maternity Hospital</b>		
Consultant Obs & Gynae	1.0	Filled
Consultant Anaesthetist	0.2	Filled
Enhanced Theatre Nurses	0.2	Unfilled
Clinical Nurse Specialist	0.8	Filled
Enhanced fertility Nurse	0.8	Unfilled
Senior Medical Scientist	0.5	Unfilled
Administrator Grade IV	0.5	Filled
Sonographer	0.2	Filled
<b>Rotunda Hospital</b>		
Consultant Obs & Gynae	0.5	Filled
Clinical Nurse Specialist	1.0	Filled
Clinical Specialist Radiographer	1.0	Filled
Senior Medical Scientist	1.0	Filled
Administrator Grade IV	1.0	Filled
<b>Cork University Maternity Hospital</b>		
Consultant Obs & Gynae	0.5	Filled
Clinical Nurse Manager 3	1.0	Filled
Clinical Nurse Specialist	1.0	Filled
Senior Medical Scientist	1.0	Unfilled
Administrator Grade IV	1.0	Filled
<b>University Hospital Galway</b>		
Clinical Nurse Specialist	1.0	Filled
Clinical Nurse Specialist	1.0	Filled
Senior Medical Scientist	1.0	Unfilled
Grade IV Administrator	1.0	Filled

<b>Nenagh General Hospital</b>		
Consultant Obs & Gynae	1.0	Unfilled
Clinical Nurse Specialist	1.0	Filled
Ultrasonographer	1.0	Filled
Senior Medical Scientist	1.0	Unfilled
Grade IV Administrator	1.0	Filled

All posts that remain unfilled are being actively recruited and NWIHP continues to work very closely with each of the Regional Infertility Hubs and the ICGP with a view to implementing a streamlined patient care pathway from primary to secondary to tertiary care as envisaged in the Model of Care.

With regards to the expansion of services provided by the fertility hubs, planning for the rollout of Phase 2 will commence in 2023.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



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