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4th May 2023

Deputy Canney
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ16801/23: To ask the Minister for Health whether reimbursement payments to abortion-providing GPs was included as part of the €11.5 million figure allocated in 2019 to abortion services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 16802/23: To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide a breakdown of the State expenditure, by all categories including GP reimbursement payments of the €9.5 million spent on abortion services in 2020, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ Ref 16803/23: To ask the Minister for Health the amount allocated to fund abortion services in 2021; the breakdown by all categories of expenditure on abortion services in 2021 including GP reimbursement payments, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Canney,

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 2019, €11.5 million was allocated for the provision of expanded termination of pregnancy services under the Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018 broken down as follows:

2019

Hospital Setting/Secondary Care	7m	Allocated to enable the implementation of the service in the acute hospital system. This development funding was used to recruit additional personnel resources across a range of sites to implement this new service within the hospital sector. Resources supported by this investment included additional consultant obstetricians and gynaecologists, midwives and nurses, ultra-sonographers, theatre staff, bereavement specialists, administrators, medical social workers and pharmacists.
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		These resources, whilst funded and established utilising funding provided to support termination of pregnancy services, have developed and being embedded within existing gynaecology and maternity services such that termination of pregnancy service is just one of the areas of responsibilities that they hold on the ground.
Community Setting/Primary Care	4.5m	<p>Allocated to fund delivery termination of pregnancy services in the community setting through primary care providers.</p> <p>In relation to primary care, the €4.5M allocated in 2019 was spent on medical practitioner fees/reimbursement, pharmacy costs and community ultrasound service. Furthermore, €231,000 was provided to women's health care clinics in 2019 to fund minor capital works, additional security measures and administration support.</p>

In 2020, an additional 9.5m was allocated, broken down as follows:

2020

Hospital Setting/Secondary Care	5m	<p>In 2020, an additional €5 million was allocated for the provision of termination of pregnancy services under the Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018 in the acute hospital setting, bringing the overall base budget of the acute hospital TOP service to €12m.</p> <p>As outlined in our previous response, funding in the Acute hospital setting, was used to recruit additional personnel resources across a range of sites to implement this new service. The development funding also covered expenditure incurred by maternity networks and individual maternity hospitals for once-off set up costs. Site funding was allocated to the six hospital groups, proportionate to their levels of activity.</p>
Community Setting/Primary Care	4.5m	<p>An additional €4.5m was allocated for provision in Primary Care, bringing the overall base budget of the primary care TOP service to €9m.</p> <p>€212,000 was provided to women's health care clinics in 2020 to fund minor capital works, additional security measures and administration support.</p>

No additional/new funding was provided for TOP services in 2021.

In relation to the funding provided to the GPs by the HSE regarding the provision of termination services in the community, a total of €3.4 million was spent in this regard in 2021.

My Options, the HSE service that provides free and confidential information and counselling to people experiencing an unplanned pregnancy, and the Crisis Pregnancy Counselling service spent a combined total of €2.2 million in 2021.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



Davinia O'Donnell, General Manager, National Women and Infants Health Programme