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13th February 2023

Deputy O'Sullivan
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 4981/23: To ask the Minister for Health if there will be any specialist posts created in community healthcare under the field of maternity care, including anti-natal education, anti-natal clinics, post-natal care and mother and babies, and so on; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy O'Sullivan,

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 NWIHP continues to work closely with the 19 maternity services to improve care provided to women during the pregnancy journey, with particular emphasis being placed on strengthening midwifery provided care in the community.

As per the 'Development of the Supported Care Pathway' baseline report in 2020 undertaken by NWIHP, significant inroads have been made in this regard with 17 of the 19 services providing off site midwifery clinics across 59 locations in the community. A link to this report is set out below:

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

Specifically in relation to postnatal care, one initiative that NWIHP is developing and deploying is the establishment of 'Postnatal Hubs' in the community. The concept of the community hub is that it is a local centre where women can access various elements of care relevant to their postnatal journey. As these hubs develop, it is planned that the services available in these hubs or that can be easily accessed by women via these hubs will include perinatal mental health, lactation support, postnatal education, specialist pelvic floor physiotherapy services, etc.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

M. Jo

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