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Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
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16<sup>th</sup> February 2023

**PQ ref: 5396/23**

**To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons on a waiting list for a pre-exposure prophylaxis appointment, by clinic and wait time.**

Deputy Shortall,

Thank you for your question to the Minister for Health, which was forwarded to my office to respond to you directly.

The provision of HSE funded, free PrEP to those at substantial risk of sexually acquiring HIV was first introduced in November 2019. Since then, 8,418 individuals have been approved for PrEP (to end 2022), including 3050 individuals in 2022. These registrations include first registrations and re-registrations, recognising that people may stop and start PrEP or move from one service to another depending on their individual circumstances at a particular point in time. The estimated number of individuals currently actively attending public PrEP clinics is almost 5000.

Information on clinic PrEP waiting lists needs to be interpreted with caution. Firstly, many services do not maintain PrEP waiting lists. Where waiting lists are maintained some report that they have <10 on a waiting list while in some it is >500. It is important to note that services find that when they contact individuals on their waiting list to offer them an appointment a proportion are already engaged with a different PrEP service. In addition, some individuals who attend a service for the first time are seeking to transfer their care to a more convenient location rather than actually access PrEP for the first time. Therefore, waiting lists are not an accurate reflection of national demand or unmet need.

Services report a waiting time of between two weeks and three months for individuals seeking to get an appointment. Some services offer appointments to the public via an electronic self-booking portal (SwiftQ) and report that when appointments are made available they are booked rapidly.


Some services are currently at capacity and therefore unable to see new PrEP patients; some services can only accept urgent referrals; while other services are seeing between 1 and 10 new patients per week.

There are currently 13 public PrEP services around the country. Since October 2022, 8 new GPs were approved as PrEP providers bringing the total number of GP/private providers to 17.

The Sexual health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme (SHCPP) acknowledges that there are many reports of individuals facing challenges in seeking PrEP appointments and is working with services to improve capacity. In addition the SHCPP recognises the importance of getting a true understanding of unmet PrEP need, particularly for those at greatest risk of HIV and determine how best to respond to any unmet need.

Of note, responding to meet the needs of individuals affected by and at risk of MPox infection presented an additional challenge to clinical services, including PrEP services and the SHCPP in 2022.

Yours Sincerely



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**Maeve O'Brien**

Interim Programme Lead

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