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Deputy Roisin Shortall
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

31st July 2023

PQ ref: 36490/23

To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 391 of 2 February 2023, to provide an update on his plans to increase the availability of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), given that existing services are oversubscribed; if his attention has been brought to the fact that not one of the four public PrEP clinics in Dublin have new appointments available; the steps he is taking to address the situation in Dublin; if his Department or the HSE has carried out any research to understand the level of unmet PrEP need nationwide; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Deputy Shortall,

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

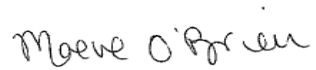
At present, there are 13 public PrEP clinics in Ireland, four of which are located in Dublin; and 17 private/GP providers approved to prescribe free PrEP, 15 of whom are located in Dublin.

Planned and current measures to increase PrEP service capacity include:

- Using the new home STI testing service for routine STI testing for stable PrEP patients, therefore reducing the number of clinic visits and freeing up clinic capacity for new appointments.
- The development of a PrEP e-learning module is underway, which will improve the number of approved PrEP providers within public and private services and therefore increase access to free PrEP medication for those in need.
- Additional resources are being sought to improve resilience and access within public STI/PrEP services, recognising that these services have faced significant challenges in responding to many STI outbreaks in the last decade, including the global mpox outbreak which began in May 2022.
- Additional funding to explore a digital solution to address PrEP challenges was recently announced. The SHCPP will co-ordinate this work, collaborating with the PrEP working group and other areas of the HSE as needed.

The Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme works with a multidisciplinary PrEP working group that has been convened to develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation framework for the PrEP programme. Understanding and responding to unmet demand and need is a core component of this work.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maeve O'Brien". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Maeve O'Brien

Programme Lead

Sexual Health & Crisis Pregnancy Programme, Health and Wellbeing
Strategy and Research, HSE Healthcare Strategy.