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04th July 2023

Deputy Murphy
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 29922/23: To ask the Minister for Health when each of the regional infertility hubs will be opened; and the number of WTE staff by job title that will be working in each if the hubs, in tabular form.

Dear Deputy Murphy,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position on the various areas and issues you raised.

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. This latter hub commenced fertility clinics led

by a specialist nurse in recent weeks with a newly appointed consultant lead in reproductive medicine to commence consultant clinics in September.

Coombe Women & Infants University Hospital		
Consultant Obs & Gynae	0.5	Filled
Consultant Endocrinologist	0.3	Filled
Clinical Nurse Specialist	1.0	Filled
Clinical Nurse Specialist	1.0	Filled
Senior Medical Scientist	1.0	Filled
Administrator Grade IV	1.0	Filled
National Maternity Hospital		
Consultant Obs & Gynae	1.0	Filled
Consultant Anaesthetist	0.2	Filled
Enhanced Theatre Nurses	0.2	Filled
Clinical Nurse Specialist	0.8	Filled
Enhanced fertility Nurse	0.8	Filled
Senior Medical Scientist	0.5	Filled
Administrator Grade IV	0.5	Filled
Sonographer	0.2	Filled
Rotunda Hospital		
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
Cork University Maternity Hospital		
Consultant Obs & Gynae	0.5	Filled
Clinical Nurse Manager 3	1.0	Filled
Clinical Nurse Specialist	1.0	Filled
Senior Medical Scientist	1.0	In recruitment
Administrator Grade IV	1.0	Filled
University Hospital Galway		
Clinical Nurse Specialist	1.0	Filled
Clinical Nurse Specialist	1.0	Filled
Senior Medical Scientist	1.0	In recruitment
Grade IV Administrator	1.0	Filled
Nenagh General Hospital		
Consultant Obs & Gynae	1.0	Filled
Clinical Nurse Specialist	1.0	Filled
Ultrasonographer	1.0	Filled
Senior Medical Scientist	1.0	In recruitment
Grade IV Administrator	1.0	Filled

With regards to the expansion of services provided by the fertility hubs, planning for the rollout of Phase 2 of the model of care i.e. provision of advanced tertiary AHR services including IVF is well underway.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



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