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21st March 2023

Deputy Nolan
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 12538/23: To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 823 of 14 February 2023, the breakdown, by category of the €7 million allocated towards abortion provision in 2019; if a portion of this money rolled into the following year; the breakdown, by category of the €9.5 million allocated to abortion in 2020; if portion of this money rolled into the following year; the breakdown of the €12 million allocated for the roll-out of abortion provision in maternity hospitals and units; the breakdown of any additional expenditure on abortion provision in each of the years 2018 to 2022; the total amount spent on abortion provision from 2018 through to the end of 2022, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Carol Nolan

Dear Deputy Nolan,

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. Of this, €7 million was allocated to enable the implementation of the service in the acute hospital system, and €4.5 million was allocated to fund delivery termination of pregnancy services in the community setting through primary care providers. All funding was provided on a recurring basis, therefore in the base budget on an ongoing basis.

In relation to the €7 million of recurring funding, this funding was provided to the HSE in the Letter of Determination 2019 to support the roll-out of termination services in this Acute Sector, as per the HSE's National Service Plan for 2019.

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/serviceplans/national-service-plan-2019.pdf>

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. An additional €4.5m was allocated for provision in Primary Care, bringing the overall base budget of the primary care TOP service to €9m.

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. Resources supported by this

investment included additional consultant obstetricians and gynaecologists, midwives and nurses, ultrasonographers, theatre staff, bereavement specialists, administrators, medical social workers and pharmacists. To date, an additional 73 WTE have been recruited to deliver and sustain termination of pregnancy services within the acute hospital setting. 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.

The development funding also covered expenditure incurred by maternity networks and individual maternity hospitals for once-off set up costs. These set up costs included equipment such as ultrasound services, examination couches, theatre equipment, portable patient monitors and renovations at local level so as to enhance patient privacy. In addition, some necessary staff-related expenditure costs were incurred pending the recruitment of permanent staff, including costs relating to agency staff, overtime of existing staff, weekend provision of additional clinics and theatre slots etc. Funding also included the development of a new fetal MRI service.

Site funding was allocated to the six hospital groups, proportionate to their levels of activity.

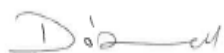
IEHG	€2.58m
DMHG	€1.25m
ULHG	€0.55m
RCSI	€2.4m
SSWHG	€2.62m
SAOLTA	€1.66m

In 2022 funding was provided for 4 additional consultant posts to support the continued roll out of TOP services.

In relation to primary care, the €4.5M allocated in 2019 and the €9M allocated in 2020 was spent on medical practitioner fees, pharmacy costs and community ultrasound service. Also included in the €9m allocation is €2.2m which was provided to 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 in 2021. Furthermore, €231,000 was provided to women's health care clinics in 2019 and €212,000 in 2020 to fund minor capital works, additional security measures and administration support.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



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