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22/05/2024

Deputy Ó Cathasaigh,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 20735/24: To ask the Minister for Health for clarification on the method undertaken to create the endometriosis framework; when we can anticipate a release date; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Ó Cathasaigh,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Representatives Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Endometriosis is one of the most common gynaecological conditions in Ireland and approximately 1 in 10 women may have this condition. There is a wide range of symptoms associated with this condition and therefore, the burden of disease varies from person to person.

Some women may have endometriosis that goes undetected, as symptoms are unbothersome, while for others, endometriosis can have a significant impact on a woman's quality of life. Often symptoms are overlapping and women are dealing with chronic pain which is usually caused by a combination of physical, psychological and/or social factors rather than originating from a single underlying condition.

The National Framework developed by NWIHP regarding the management of endometriosis in Ireland aims to represent a change in the approach to the management of endometriosis, recognising and highlighting endometriosis as a priority area for service improvement. The Framework is expected to be published in Q2 of this year.

During the course of its work, NWIHP via its Clinical Director had the opportunity to meet with the Endometriosis Association of Ireland (EAI) at a meeting with the Minister. At this meeting NWIHP, in tandem with the NCHD/ICGP leads for women's health listened to the concerns of the of the EAI representatives.

In devising the Framework, NWIHP have identified an overarching model of care that commences in primary care and extends along into secondary and specialist complex care in a structured and standardised manner. The six maternity networks in place will be the basic building block upon which this pathway will develop thereby enabling these care pathways to be integrated into existing obstetrics and gynaecological services.

In developing this Framework and overseeing the investment programme underpinning it, it is recognised by NWIHP that this is the start of a journey in Ireland regarding developing and implementing more robust, structured and resourced care pathways for women with endometriosis. It is important to note that the framework developed was led by the clinical expertise of lead consultants in this area. These leads based on their years of expertise, treatment, management and advocacy for women's health ensure that the framework adopted a holistic approach to care and acknowledges that women with endometriosis experience and manage the condition in an individualised manner.

As such NWIHP, working closely and collaboratively with the six maternity networks and front line clinical teams, will be reviewing and monitoring the impact of the National Framework and the associated additional resources being allocated, with a view to identifying what further work may be needed in this critical care area in the future.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



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