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Deputy Lawlor,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ 14182/25: To ask the Minister for Health her plans to establish a women's health hub in Wexford; and if she will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Lawlor,

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.

The development of women's health hubs has been promoted and advocated for by the HSE's National Women and Infants Health Programme (NWIHP). Such hubs can be located either on a hospital site or in the context of space restrictions on acute sites and in terms of enabling ease of access, they can also be located within the community. Effectively the concept of these hubs is to concentrate in one designated location a collection of women related health services such that synergies between these services are maximised and care for women can be easier planned and navigated from both the woman's perspective and the provider's perspective.

Women's health hubs are at various stages of development across the country as hospital services endeavour to secure the required facilities and locations and build and design new defined hubs of women's services from both a conceptual and design perspective.

In order to support the on-going development of these hubs, NWIHP have had discussions with Wexford General Hospital as to the feasibility of such a development and would acknowledge that the proposal has garnered strong clinical and executive support. Options to enable such a hub have been and will continue to be actively explored in relation to Wexford with a number of ideas being reviewed in this regard including development of a dedicated hub on a green field site on the hospital campus or commercial leasing of required facilities in the community.

Specifically in relation women's health hubs, one initiative that NWIHP is developing and deploying is the establishment of postnatal hubs in the community. The concept of the postnatal hub is that it is a local centre where women can access various elements of care relevant to their postnatal journey. As these hubs develop, it is planned that the services available in these hubs will include perinatal mental health, lactation support, postnatal education, specialist pelvic floor physiotherapy services, etc.

A number of hospitals serving rural communities have been successfully awarded hub funding including Kerry, CUMH, Kilkenny, Sligo and Portluncula. Funds to expand postnatal hubs have been secured by NWIHP with all remaining maternity services, including Wexford, invited to make a submission so as to be considered for the next phase of investment in this area.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

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