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21st November 2023

Deputy O'Rourke
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 48326/23: To ask the Minister for Health the number of birthing pools in use in each maternity hospital and maternity unit nationwide, in tabular form

Dear Deputy O'Rourke,

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.

Twelve of Ireland's 19 maternity hospitals have labouring pools with two more units pending, all enable women to labour in water, whilst only three currently offer the option of birthing in water. Use of the pools by women is enabled further to a risk assessment.

NWIHP have a HSE National Lead in Water Birth Services, part of her role is to support the implementation of birthing pools for labour and birth in all 19 maternity units. Also in the remit of her role is to ensure care is evidence based and midwives are supported by skills updates and robust guidelines on water birth. In this context, NWIHP would anticipate that the number of services providing water births will increase over time.

<u>Units with Birthing pools</u>	<u>Units Pending</u>	<u>Units without Birthing Pools</u>
The Coombe	St Luke's Kilkenny	Portlaoise
NMH	Mullingar	Clonmel
Rotunda		Letterkenny
Wexford		Portiuncula
Waterford		Mayo
CUMH		
Limerick		
Sligo		
Cavan		
OLOL		
Kerry		
Galway		

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



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