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12<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Deputy Smyth  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ 51850/23: To ask the Minister for Health to provide an update on the provision of menopause services, specifically the number of clinics available through the public health service; the contact details for each menopause clinic; the waiting times for a first appointment at a menopause clinic; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Smyth,

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.

A key piece of work for the National Women's and Infants Health Programme was working collaboratively with secondary care providers regarding the development of complex menopause clinics on a regional basis. While it is envisaged that the vast majority of care in the area of menopause should be provided for in the primary setting, these speciality clinics will provide care for those whose symptoms and/or medical history require more specialist interventions. These clinics will accept referrals from GPs in their surrounding catchment areas, providing specialist medical advice and management to a cohort of symptomatic menopausal women.

The HSE now has in place six regional complex menopause services – one in each of the existing maternity networks located in each of the six hospital groups. Specifically, these clinics are located in the Coombe Hospital, the National Maternity Hospital, the Rotunda Hospital, Galway University Hospital, Cork University Maternity Hospital and Nenagh Hospital under the clinical governance of University Maternity Hospital Limerick.

The resource package for each site funded by NWIHP included the provision for structured input of a Consultant Obstetrician & Gynaecologist and/or General Practitioner with a certified specialist interest in the area of menopause management, a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Menopause and an administrator.

On average, in each of the complex menopause services 1 – 2 specialist clinics are provided per week, with new and review patients being seen at these clinics. Further follow up and review clinics are being developed by the new clinical nurse specialist resources who are being actively trained up and certified in this area under the governance of the designated local medical lead. It is anticipated by NWIHP that each clinic will see on average 400 – 500 new patients per annum.

At present women referred to these specialist clinics are recorded as part of the general gynaecology outpatient waiting list held in each location. However, NWIHP is currently in the process of establishing a national professional network comprising of all six clinical leads. The development and deployment of these clinics will be overseen and guided within the structure, chaired by the Clinical Lead in NWIHP.

As part of this work programme a nationally defined suite of activity metrics are due to be designed and monitored and reviewed at national level within this professional network. These activity metrics will include specific wait times for the six clinics across the country.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



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