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10th May 2024

Deputy Cullinane
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 18635/24: To ask the Minister for Health for a response to the calls from healthcare providers to address the gaps in training and data collection by recruiting a Primary Care Lead for Termination of Pregnancy, in light of the fact more than 90% of abortions take place within primary care settings; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position on the various areas and issues you raised.

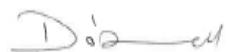
The provision of safe and effective abortion services is contingent on collaborative working across of a range of services and personnel, including: General Practice, family planning services and maternity services and allied to this, appropriate funding and resourcing.

In the HSE, the Termination of Pregnancy Service sits under the auspices of the National Women and Infants Health Programme (NWIHP). NWIHP appointed a National Clinical Lead for TOP Services in December 2019, the National Clinical Lead works with the NWIHP Clinical Director, NWIHP Programme team, Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (IOG), Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP), Office of Nursing and Midwifery Services Division (ONMSD) and other relevant stakeholders within and external to the HSE, to provide clinical leadership for the implementation of safe, evidence-based, quality-assured, woman-centred, accessible services for women who require abortion care. In addition, a HSE ICGP National GP Lead for Women's Health is in post and actively contributing to relevant work-programmes, including TOP related initiatives.

A comprehensive programme of work is underway to deliver on the recommendations arising from the 2022 Review(s) of Termination of Pregnancy i.e. the O'Shea and Regan Reviews. A National Termination of Pregnancy, Service Improvement Group (SIG) has been established to deliver upon these commitments. Membership of the SIG is broad and comprises of a variety of health and allied healthcare professionals including: General Practice/Community TOP providers, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Maternal Fetal Medicine, Clinical Genetics, Palliative Care, Neonatology, Psychiatry, Midwifery, Medical Social Work, Bereavement care and General Practice. Service user representatives and support/advocacy groups are also represented on the membership of the Group.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



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