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Deputy Smyth  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ 32179/24: To ask the Minister for Health for an update on the provision of menopause services; 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 can 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.

Access to these clinics is guided by an overarching set of clinical parameters thereby ensuring that the resources available within the above six hospitals are targeted at those women who warrant and need clinical intervention and management at secondary level. Where referrals are received that are deemed more appropriately managed within primary care or arise outside the relevant catchment area, then these referrals will be diverted back to the relevant referrer with guidance as why this decision was made.

Since the inception of these clinics, demand around the country has been high with long wait times for a first appointment being approximately 16-18 weeks or so, with a view to increase capacity within the service and reduce wait times, NWIHP are working with the Department of Health, have secured additional resources (medical and administrative) which will be targeted at those services experiencing the highest demand. These resources are expected to be approved & allocated shortly.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



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