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18th December 2019

Deputy Catherine Connolly,
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 51312/19 To ask the Minister for Health if situations have arisen in which women that have been treated for a termination of pregnancy have recovered in a maternity wards; if so, the number and location of same; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Connolly,

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.

Hospitals providing termination of pregnancy services do so on a structured clinical basis with women invited to pre-arranged clinics. The time period to complete a termination can vary significantly from patient to patient. Every woman is treated with dignity and respect during this procedure. Where feasible, women presenting for a termination of pregnancy are managed on gynaecology wards, with priority been given to these women in terms of accessing single rooms.

However, as the provision of termination services occurs within the existing infrastructure available to maternity sites and services, there may be occasions due to the demand for the termination service and/or competing demands from other areas of the hospital e.g. infection control requirements, that the location of the woman during their management is not ideal. This may result in women being managed and cared for on a maternity ward. However, every attempt is made to ensure that again the woman is managed in a single room. Similar challenges arise in relation to the care and management of women undergoing miscarriages. Data in relation to the number of incidences whereby a woman undergoing a termination procedure may have been managed and cared for in a maternity ward is not available or routinely recorded/collated within the health service.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours faithfully,

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