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Deputy Martin
Leinster House
Dublin 2

3rd July 2019

PQ Ref 23870/19 To ask the Minister for Health the services being offered to women in direct provision centres and emergency reception and orientation centres that have experienced miscarriages and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Martin,

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.

Women residing in direct provision centres and emergency reception and orientation centres who have experienced or are experiencing a miscarriage and who present to a public maternity service would be cared for and managed in line with the care pathway available to all women presenting with this condition as per the National HSE Guideline on Management of Early Pregnancy Miscarriage.

Ordinarily women experiencing a miscarriage would present to maternity services via the emergency department or the designated out of hours service. Pathways and processes are in place in maternity services such that where women may present at an emergency department in a hospital which provides maternity services i.e. a maternity service that is not located in a standalone hospital, that these women are quickly identified and fast tracked to the maternity department. If a woman presents to a hospital that does not have a maternity service associated with it, she will be referred immediately to the nearest maternity service for care and management.

The standard management of pregnancy loss includes diagnostic techniques and therapeutic interventions allowing more treatment to be carried out in maternity service emergency departments or a designated out of hours services. Women are supported in making an informed choice about their care and management. Patient counselling is particularly important with onward referrals being made to bereavement services and/or counselling services if deemed required or requested by the patient.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

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