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21st July 2020

Deputy Whitmore,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 14465/20 To ask the Minister for Health in the context of Covid-19 in relation to the recent guidelines requiring patients to quarantine before surgeries if this includes elected and emergency C-sections in maternity hospitals; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Whitmore,

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.

There are 19 maternity hospitals, and each have slightly different procedures for managing elective caesarean sections. All hospitals currently use a history to screen for possible infection or contacts and a swab is taken if the screening indicates that this is advisable. Some hospitals swab all patients for elective surgery 24 to 48 hours prior to admission.

To our knowledge, elective caesarean sections are not asked to quarantine prior to surgery. As emergency caesarean sections need to be done at very short notice, and by definition unexpectedly, the question of quarantine does not arise.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

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