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Deputy Stanley
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

E: brian.stanley@oireachtas.ie

Re: PQ Number 9764/20

Question: To ask the Minister for Health if all workers will be tested when a cluster appears in a meat plant; and if workers of that facility should only return to work when they have been cleared of Covid-19.

Dear Deputy Stanley,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which has been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response.

Any person who meets testing criteria will be tested, which includes symptomatic cases and those who are close contacts of a confirmed case. A public health risk assessment is done to determine if testing of all workers in the meat processing facility is required. This risk assessment is a continuous process for the duration of an outbreak.

Criteria in the risk assessment process would include matters such as the number of infections, the proportion of infections to the entire workforce, concerns over the internal geographic spread of disease within the facility, how quickly the infection appeared to be spreading within a plant, an assessment of what control measures were able to be implemented, etc.

Newly diagnosed covid positive employees are excluded from work for 14 days. If employees are medically well, they can return to work once fever free for 5 days, provided 14 days of self-isolation after symptom onset (or date of test if no symptoms) has elapsed. The employees are no longer infectious to others after 14 days have elapsed. A negative / not-detected test is not required in advance of returning to work.

I trust this addresses your question.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Kelleher', with a horizontal line underneath.

DR. KEVIN KELLEHER

ASSISTANT NATIONAL DIRECTOR FOR PUBLIC HEALTH,

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND TRANSFORMATION

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