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8th December 2020

Deputy O'Rourke,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 37875/20 To ask the Minister for Health if consideration has been given to the establishment of a human milk bank here similar to a bank (details supplied) in County Fermanagh; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy O'Rourke,

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.

The HSE is committed to maintaining the supply of donor expressed breast milk (DEBM) to sick or preterm babies when on occasion their mothers are unable to produce sufficient breast milk for their needs.

All maternity and children's hospitals have clinical guidelines in place relating to the care of sick and pre term babies and prioritisation of DEBM. DEBM is available in all hospitals providing care to these babies.

Maternity and children's hospitals purchase DEBM from the Western Health & Social Care Trust Human Milk Bank based in Enniskillen. The HSE does not currently have plans to establish and operate a human milk bank in the Republic of Ireland.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary-Jo Biggs'.

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