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12th October 2020

Deputy Kenny,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 26012/20 To ask the Minister if some maternity hospitals have the facilities to carry out quick turnaround Covid-19 testing; if this facility can be extended to cover partners of pregnant persons in order that they can be present for scans and other maternity services and resume the much needed support of their partners during hospital maternity visits and labour; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Kenny,

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 ability to carry out quick turnaround Covid-19 testing is limited, with capacity for same at the moment targeted at women requiring the care of maternity services and healthcare staff. Maternity services are currently exploring the feasibility and cost of extending this service. All maternity services allow partners to attend for labour and delivery, and are working towards facilitating partners to attend postnatally allowing for consideration of such areas and issues as infrastructure, staffing levels, current framework level etc.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

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