



Clár Sláinte Náisiúnta do Mhná & do Naíonáin
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte, Aonad 7A, Áras
Dargan, An Ceantar Theas, Baile Átha Cliath 8
T: 076 695 9991

National Women and Infants Health Programme
Health Service Executive, Unit 7A, The Dargan Building,
Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8
T: 076 695 9991

9th February 2021

Deputy Cairns
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 4946/21: To ask the Minister for Health if it will be ensured that in cases in which maternity services know that distressing or potentially distressing information is being presented to patients in maternity services that patients will be allowed to have their partner or an accompanying person with them in the context of Covid-19 restrictions; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Cairns

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.

Since the commencement of the Covid-19 pandemic, maternity services have been committed to ensuring that to the best of their ability the impact of Covid-19 on services and the pregnancy experience of every mother and their partner should be kept to an absolute minimum wherever feasible. Every restriction and deviation from normal practice across the country is a cause of concern and deeply regretted at local and national level. Maternity services and their dedicated staff are acutely aware of how unique the pregnancy journey is for each woman and her family and are mindful how the presence of loved ones can offer unique support and care in this journey.

It is important to highlight that throughout the pandemic every maternity service has remained acutely aware and very sensitive to specific situations regarding pregnancy loss, still birth and unexpected complications. It is readily acknowledged that these are outcomes and circumstances that affect women and their partners significantly. It is not possible for services to have advanced knowledge as to which women will be receiving distressing and upsetting news. However as and when these situations arise or are known or suspected in advance, all maternity services endeavour in these situations to ensure that women have the on-site support of their partner.

All involved in the provision of maternity services are aware of the difficulty and distress that the current restrictions on accompanying persons due to COVID 19 have caused. All service providers look forward to the restoration of normal visiting and the accommodation of partners.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



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