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Deputy Griffin,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 14610/21: To ask the Minister for Health the best practice procedures in hospitals when dealing with a fatal foetal abnormality or in circumstances in which a referral is made to an overseas hospital; if Irish hospitals liaising with UK hospitals are obliged to share information such as obstetrics reports and other relevant medical information; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Griffin

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.

Section 11 of the Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018 states “*a termination of pregnancy may be carried out in accordance with this section where 2 medical practitioners, having examined the pregnant woman, are of the reasonable opinion formed in good faith that there is present a condition affecting the foetus that is likely to lead to the death of the foetus either before, or within 28 days of, birth.*” The Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology developed a guideline for the management of cases related to section 11 of the legislation. This guideline is available on the RCPI website <https://rcpi-live-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/IOG-TOPFA-PATHWAY-FINAL-180119.pdf>.

The guideline sets out the best practice to be followed by clinicians in cases provided for in Section 11 of The Act.

Care for women attending another jurisdiction for abortion care is individualised based on the woman's circumstances. While there is no obligation to share information with a hospital in another jurisdiction, there are times when this may be done. The patient may also obtain a copy of their medical notes under FOI.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

Kilian McGrane, Director, National Women and Infants Health Programme