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3rd August 2021

Deputy Canney
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 24143/21: To ask the Minister for Health the reason gynaecologists are not available on site full-time as opposed to being on call in maternity units to deal with emergency issues that may arise, including threatened miscarriage; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Canney,

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.

Maternity services are provided by all 19 maternity service on a 24/7, 365 days a year, with all services positioned to receive and manage women who may present by means of an on-site 24/7 medical and midwifery team.

In line with every other speciality in Ireland, including those who may also experience out of hours presentation, maternity and gynaecology service are staffed by means of consultants having on-site presence during core working hours, with out of hour's requirements being managed by means of a formal designated on-call consultant roster system.

Each maternity service has in place formal escalation policies and procedures, such that the medical and midwifery team on site out of hours, can and will request the support of the designated consultant on-call by either remote consultation or on-site presence – whichever is deemed most clinically required. These arrangements ensure that all maternity services remain under the clinical governance and supervision of a designated consultant at all times, who are positioned to make themselves available as and when required.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

M. Jo

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