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15th July 2021

Deputy Canney
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 24144/21: To ask the Minister for Health his views on the practice of having expectant mothers with threatened miscarriage and who have a history of miscarriage having to go to accident and emergency departments rather than having direct access to the maternity unit which will be dealing with the issue; 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.

The pathway for women presenting to Maternity Services with threatened miscarriage varies across the 19 maternity services in place in Ireland, with the biggest factor informing the design and delivery of these care pathways being whether the maternity service is provided in a standalone maternity and gynaecology hospital like for example the Rotunda or Coombe or whether the maternity service is provided as part of the suite of patient services provided by a general acute hospital for example in Wexford, Mayo or Sligo.

Standalone sites and services like the Rotunda and Coombe do have 24/7 emergency care departments for women with these emergency services specialising solely in the area of maternity and gynaecology, hence women presenting to these services having “direct access” to the maternity unit as such.

In the other sites and services i.e. those co-located within general hospitals, during core hours women presenting with threatened miscarriages are managed directly in the Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit. Out of hours, in the majority of services women present to the hospital’s Emergency Department as the defined emergency access point for all patients, with such women then being triaged and transferred to the maternity service on site

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

M. Jo

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