



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

3rd March 2022

Deputy Donnelly,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 9410/22: To ask the Minister for Health if direction will be given to maternity hospitals in relation to access to maternity wards for expectant fathers in the lead up to a birth given that Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted.

PQ 12513/22: To ask the Minister for Health the direction that has been given to maternity hospitals in relation to the admittance of fathers and birthing partners to labour wards for the full length of birth with the removal of Covid-19 restrictions.

Dear Deputy Donnelly,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The HSE guidance on visiting, including access for nominated support partners in the maternity context, is provided by the HSE's Anti-Microbial Infection Prevention and Control (AMRIC) team. This guidance is updated regularly, in line with the changing circumstances of the pandemic, the prevailing transmission rates and the level of vaccination in the population. The most recent update was issued for implementation on the 21st February 2022.

In addition to the generic hospital guidance, there is specific guidance for maternity services and access for nominated support partners. The current guidance can be found at:

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/guidanceforhealthcareworkers/acutehospitalsguidance/Guidance%20on%20Access%20to%20Acute%20Hospitals%20for%20Nominated%20Support%20Partners.pdf>

While it is not possible to draw comparison to pre-pandemic presence directly, it can be surmised that hospitals are guided to facilitate access where safe and possible to do so.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

M. Jo

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