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29th June 2022

Deputy Tully
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 30867/22: To ask the Minister for Health if a woman attending a midwifery led unit can be discharged from the unit's care due to having a positive test for group b streptococcus; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Tully,

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.

Group B streptococcus (group B strep) is a common bacteria found in the vagina, urine or rectum. It's normally harmless and most people will not realise they have it. It can potentially be problematic in pregnancy as it could spread to the baby and make them very ill. As a result of this, if a woman test positive for group B strep extra care and treatment may be needed.

There are currently two Midwifery Led Units (MLU) in Ireland, Drogheda MLU and Cavan MLU. Drogheda MLU has a policy in place to allow for group B strep positive mother's to receive care in their unit. Cavan MLU is currently progressing a group B strep guideline which once completed will allow for group B strep positive mothers to receive care in their unit.

This guideline is due for completion by the end of 2022 / start of 2023. Once completed, both MLUs in Ireland will allow for the care of group B strep positive mothers.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

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