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6th July 2022

Deputy Collins
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 31078/22: To ask the Minister for Health if external organisations have been contracted by the HSE to provide manual vacuum aspiration training for hospital staff involved in abortion provision; the organisations that were contracted; the details of the contracts including timeframes and sums payable; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Collins,

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 management of terminations by means of Manual Vacuum Aspiration (MVA) is provided in the acute sector in Ireland, however, termination of pregnancy is primarily carried out by administration of medication rather than by surgical means. A number of termination of pregnancy providers have been training in MVA however, the HSE does not hold a specific contract for provision of MVA training.

Specialist training in obstetrics & gynaecology in Ireland and certification of same is provided by the Institute of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, as the postgraduate training body recognised by the Irish Medical Council for this purpose and not by the HSE itself. Training on abortion care has been included in the curriculum for all basic and specialty trainees in obstetrics and gynaecology. New objective structured assessment of technical skills (OSATS) have also been written for MVA (optional for trainees).

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

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