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30th November 2022

Deputy Cairns
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 57014/22: To ask the Minister for Health the steps that he is taking to provide specialist gynaecology services for individuals with down syndrome.

Dear Deputy Cairns

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.

Obstetric services on the whole generally care for and manage young healthy persons, however the training programmes provided by educational providers in collaboration with service providers by means of clinical placements, also ensure that health care professionals are positioned and capable of managing the care requirements of persons presenting with specific needs, clinical or otherwise.

Therefore when a person presents with a disability, this is not so unusual that the system cannot adapt to the specific needs of that person and ensure that any additional requirements e.g. sign language requirements, mobility supports etc, are secured to ensure that the holistic needs of that person are met.

The HSE has published guidelines to give practical guidance to all health and social care staff about how they can provide accessible services to patients and clients with disabilities. The guidelines aim to enable staff to effectively and competently deal with issues arising from a person's disability. There are guidelines for specific services, and Guideline 10 is regarding accessible hospital services.

Here they advise to draw on the expertise of staff from across the hospital, as relevant to the particular need of the individual such as physiotherapists, social workers and speech and language therapists, who will assist with planning services and information for people with disabilities prior to admission and on discharge

Guideline 10 can be found on the link below:

https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/yourhealthservice/access/natguideaccessibleservices/part2.html#service_s10

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

M. Jo

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