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Deputy Ivana Bacik
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
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PQ 16533/24

To ask the Minister for Health if he has engaged with technology communications companies with respect to advertising of rogue crisis pregnancy agencies' websites online; and if he will make a statement on his Department's work to ensure that persons seeking advice are able to access MyOptions.ie and other HSE resources. -Ivana Bacik

Dear Deputy Bacik,

We are aware that disingenuous agencies are operating in Ireland. These organisations may not be upfront about their intentions and may try to influence a person's decision with regard to their pregnancy. Signs of a disingenuous service include a delay in giving pregnancy test results, advice and supports that do not include information on abortion services, and the use of negative or frightening language.

We strongly recommend that people should contact [My Options](#), which is the official HSE service if they need information or support in the event of an unplanned pregnancy, or if they are in need of post-abortion supports. The HSE My Options service is available to anyone who is experiencing an unplanned pregnancy and is in need of support.

Our research shows that the vast majority of people who need advice and information about an unplanned pregnancy will search online in the first instance. We recommend that people only visit a HSE-funded unplanned pregnancy counselling service and to look for the HSE name or logo when seeking information online. The My Options support service can provide information on these HSE-funded agencies and they are also listed on myoptions.ie.

The HSE has taken a number of measures to address the issue of disingenuous agencies targeting people experiencing unplanned pregnancy. We promote awareness of My Options through Google search ads and targeted social media which are live all year round. We also use radio, digital audio and out of home (poster) advertising. My Options materials are currently advertised in GP surgeries, as for some people experiencing an unplanned pregnancy this is where they will go for information.

The My Options search ad campaign is performing extremely well and appears as the top ad for any related searches. To help combat the promotion of disingenuous messaging, we are monitoring any competitors and have set a bid management strategy to automatically increase our bids if another website appears ahead of us. We monitor the search ad performance and that of disingenuous agencies on an on-going basis and share feedback with Google if we encounter any breaches of policy. We run regular social media posts to highlight that disingenuous agencies are operating and encourage the use of the HSE's My Options service as a trusted source of information. Our Social Media Community Team, regularly monitor post comments to remove comments and links from external services and respond to any questions or queries that come in on the topic. The community team on social media will always respond with factual information and provide the My Options helpline details where necessary.

The HSE [My Options](#) service is free of charge to everyone. Professional, experienced counsellors are available to talk to you about all your options including continuing pregnancy supports and information about abortion services. The [My Options](#) counselling and information service is available at Freephone 1800 828 010 from 9am to 8pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 7pm Friday and Saturday 10am to 2pm. If you are calling from outside the Republic of Ireland the number is +353 599 16 5066. Medical advice is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The service can provide information and support in over 240 languages. The phone line counselling service can also refer people to face-to-face counselling.

Yours Sincerely,



Orla McGowan

Programme Lead

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