



Ref: PQ 28027/25

24th June 2025

Deputy Rose Conway Walsh
Dáil Eireann
Dublin 2

Dear Conway Walsh

I refer to your parliamentary question below which has been forwarded to me for attention.

PQ 28027/25 – To ask the Minister for Health if it is the head of orthopaedic surgeons or the Board of CHI who makes a determination on whether a child can receive spinal surgery; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Children's Health Ireland (CHI) Response:

Children's Health Ireland (CHI) can advise that the decision-making process regarding spinal surgery depends on a number of factors.

The surgeon will discuss the treatment options with each patient and their family. The natural history of the spinal condition will be explained - i.e what happens if the problem is not treated. Alternative treatment options are explained - observation, the role of physiotherapy, casting, brace management, surgery.

The type of surgery will vary depending on the type of scoliosis, the size and location of the curve, the age and maturity of the patient, the amount of growth remaining, the presence of other health conditions (cardiac, respiratory, renal, endocrine, neurological etc) Once the treatment strategy has been agreed, the risks, potential side effects and complications of the treatment will be discussed with the patient and their family. The anticipated recovery and rehabilitation programme will also be explained.

The patient and their family are then invited to ask questions - these are answered openly and clearly. Only when this engagement has occurred can the patient and their family agree to have spinal surgery.

Where the surgeon has recommended surgery, it is the patient and their family who decide to have spinal surgery. the Board does not have any involvement in the clinical decision making process regarding spinal surgery.

Children's Health Ireland at Connolly | Crumlin | Tallaght | Temple Street

Our Mission is to: Promote and provide child-centred, research-led and learning informed healthcare, to the highest standards of safety and excellence. We will do this in partnership with each other, with children, young people and their families through a network of children's services in Ireland.

CRA Registered Charity Number (RCN): 20202295 **Revenue Charitable Status CHY:** 22235

Board Members: Prof James Browne (Chairman), Ms Mary Cryan, Ms Mary Donovan, Ms Catherine Guy, Dr Gavin Lavery, Ms Brigid McManus, Ms Eleanor O'Neill

Sláinte Leanaí Éireann



Children's Health Ireland

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Yours sincerely

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