
For Written Answer on : 02/11/2021
Question Number(s): 897 Question Reference(s): 52362/21
Department: Health
Asked by: Carol Nolan T.D.

QUESTION

To ask the Minister for Health the number of adverse events reported to and or dealt with by the State Claims Agency since 1 January 2019 related to the Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

REPLY

The Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018 was signed into law on 20 December 2018 and commenced on 1 January 2019.

The Act permits termination to be carried out in cases where there is a risk to the life, or of serious harm to the health, of the pregnant woman; where there is a condition present which is likely to lead to the death of the foetus either before or within 28 days of birth; and without restriction up to 12 weeks of pregnancy.

Expanded services for termination of pregnancy commenced on 1 January 2019 and are provided through participating General Practitioners and hospitals throughout the country.

Section 20 of the Act provides for a notification system in relation to all terminations of pregnancy carried out under the legislation, and requires the Minister to publish an annual report on the notifications received in a given year. Two such Annual Reports have been published to date. The Annual Report 2019 indicated that a total of 6,666 notifications of terminations of pregnancy were received that year, while the Annual Report 2020 showed that in total 6577 medical procedures were carried out under the Act in 2020.

The State Claims Agency hosts the National Incident Management System (NIMS) which is the principal source of national data on incident activity for the Irish public health service. Under the National Treasury Management Agency (Amendment) Act 2000 State authorities are obliged to report adverse incidents promptly to the State Claims Agency (SCA). This allows the SCA, in conjunction with State authorities, to identify and analyse developing trends and patterns and to work with the State authorities concerned to develop and implement risk mitigation strategies. It is also important in the investigation of any subsequent claim.

I have been informed by the SCA that 94 incidents have been reported to the Agency via NIMS between 01/01/2019 to 26/10/2021 which relate to the Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018. These incidents were identified via a search of relevant fields in NIMS which was supported by a manual review for patients or service users of the Termination of Pregnancy services. Details of this process are below.

Criteria used

- Incidents reported since 01/01/2019 across all healthcare locations on NIMS.
- Who was involved = Patient/ Service User
- Sub Hazard Type is “Birth Specific Procedures”, “Clinical Procedures” or “Medication”
- Incidents have been identified by searching in the free text fields “Summary of the Incident”, “Type of Injury (Other)” or “Sub hazard type (text)” for the words “TOP” (termination of pregnancy), “STOP” (surgical termination of pregnancy), “MTOPT” (medical termination of pregnancy), “Termination”, “Medical termination”, “Abortion”
- A manual review was carried out on the resulting list of incidents by the SCA Clinical Risk Unit to determine relevance to the query.
- This report is correct as of 26/10/2021