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16th November 2021

Deputy Canney,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ52637/21: To ask the Minister for Health further to his acknowledgement of the findings of recent UCC research which indicated that babies may have survived abortions performed under the Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018, if such incidences occurred; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Canney,

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 Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018 sets out the parameters in which termination of pregnancy may be lawfully carried out in this country. As per Sections 9, 10 and 11 of the Act, a termination of pregnancy may be carried out where there is a risk to the life or of serious harm to the health of the pregnant woman, or where there exists a condition likely to lead to the death of the foetus. Medical practitioners are bound through professional regulatory mechanisms to operate in accordance with best medical practice.

The HSE is not currently collating data nationally on termination of pregnancy services, however there is regular ongoing engagement between the Department of Health and the HSE to facilitate the operation of the service and to resolve any issues that may arise including those outlined in the UCC research that you refer to in your question.

Subsection 7 of the Act calls for a review of operation of Act. This review commenced in 2021 under the auspice of the Department of Health.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ma de Ur'.

