

Medical Termination of Pregnancy

The Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018 provides the legislative basis for medical termination of pregnancy in certain circumstances.

The question of whether a Medisec member may wish to provide such services or not is entirely a matter for their own discretion. The Medical Council's *Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners, 9th Edition, 2024* ("the Guide") provides for conscientious objection at paragraph 42, and outlines steps a doctor must take:

42.1 *If you have a conscientious objection to providing or participating in a lawful procedure, treatment or form of care, you must:*

- *Inform your employer, colleagues and the patient as soon as possible.*
- *Inform the patient that they have a right to seek the lawful procedure, treatment or form of care from another doctor.*
- *Give the patient enough information to enable them to transfer to another doctor to obtain the required treatment.*
- *Make such arrangements as may be necessary to enable the patient to obtain the required treatment (see transfer of care).*
- *Not mislead or obstruct a patient's access to the lawful procedure, treatment or form of care based on your conscientious objection.*

Conscientious objection does not extend to follow up care and you are required to provide follow-up care to patients who have had a medical termination. Paragraph 42.4 of the Guide states that "*You must provide care, support and follow-up for patients who have had a lawful procedure, treatment or form of care to which you have a conscientious objection.*"

We confirm that the provision of such services will be covered as per Medisec's Policy terms and conditions, subject to:

1. The GP having the appropriate training and working within and maintaining their competence
2. The GP providing the services in accordance with clinical guidelines issued by the ICGP
3. The GP following all legal, contractual and ethical obligations, and
4. Appropriate referral pathways and clinical support services being in place.

The ICGP, the professional and training body for Irish GPs, has issued guidelines regarding the provision of medical termination of pregnancy services in general practice. Clinical guidelines are the guidance for GPs for new services to facilitate high quality safe care for patients. The clinical guidelines are issued to ICGP members, and are accompanied by eLearning resources, training workshops and additional training and educational supports available on the ICGP website.

Medisec Members are reminded that they should not undertake the provision of such services without appropriate training and that cover will not be in place under the Medisec Policy unless the Medisec's Policy terms and conditions and requirements outlined at 1-4 above are met.

The contents of this publication are indicative of current developments and contain guidance on general medico legal queries. It does not constitute and should not be relied upon as definitive legal, clinical or other advice and if you have any specific queries, please contact Medisec for advice.

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January 2024