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RE Official Information Act request CDHB 10643

I refer to your email dated 25 June 2021 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from Canterbury DHB. We note that you added in another question on 23 July 2021. Specifically:

1. I am wanting to clarify the current practice of abortion services when children are born alive following an induced labour abortion.
2. I have been told that the Canterbury DHB has been quoted as saying:
“In the extremely rare occurrence that a baby were to be born alive following a late term abortion, the baby would be wrapped and then held until it passed.”
3. I want to clarify whether this is an accurate representation of current practice or whether it is not accurate (or any further details that are not considered in the quoted statement). I would like clarity on the exact requirements of medical staff in the event that a child was born alive following a late term abortion.
4. Details of the number of cases of alive births post abortion/termination, and if possible whether the abortion/termination was because of birth defects or because of another reason.

At Canterbury DHB a Maternal Fetal Medicine Specialist will use feticide to stop the fetal heart, from 22 weeks of pregnancy, if there is a fetal abnormality incompatible with life. A live birth after an intended abortion is therefore extremely unlikely.

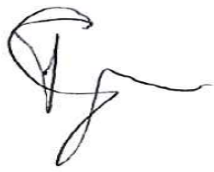
In the rare event that a baby is born alive following an abortion it will be treated with the upmost compassion and provided with appropriate care, which is determined by the health practitioner in consultation with the parent/s.

There has been one case of an alive birth after 22 weeks at Canterbury DHB in the last five years. This abortion was due to a fetal abnormality.

I trust that this satisfies your interest in this matter.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Canterbury DHB website after your receipt of this response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Tracey Maisey', written in a cursive style.

Tracey Maisey
Executive Director
Planning, Funding & Decision Support