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## High Court grants hospital permission to give blood to Jehovah's Witness child

Friday, October 21, 2011 - 05:50 PM

The High Court has granted a Dublin maternity hospital orders allowing it to perform, if required, an emergency blood transfusion to the unborn child of a Jehovah's Witnesses couple who is at risk of being delivered prematurely.

Today the court heard the child's mother, who is approximately 26 weeks pregnant, presented to the Coombe Maternity Hospital in recent days with a spontaneous premature ruptured membrane.

Doctors at the hospital treating the woman, who cannot be identified by order of the court, say they can't predict exactly when the child will be delivered but that the likelihood of a premature birth is high.

They claim in the event the child is born in the next four to five weeks the infant "most likely will require a transfusion of blood or blood related products in order to safeguard the child's life and prevent it from sustaining serious injury."

However the parents, for religious reasons, have refused to give their consent to allow the hospital administer a transfusion to the child.

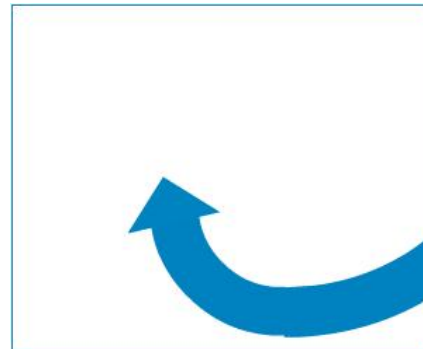
In his ruling today Mr Justice Kevin Feeney said that it was an appropriate and urgent case to make orders allowing the hospital to perform such treatment

The Judge, who made the order after hearing submissions from both the child's father and the hospital, said the court had to be mindful of the child safety, well being and medical integrity.

In those circumstances the court was satisfied to grant the hospital the orders it requires to perform any transfusion that the child may or may not require, he added.

Seeking the orders Eileen Barrington SC for the Chief Executive Officer of the Coombe hospital, said medical staff's concern for the child's health was due to of the high probability it will be born premature, particularly during the next four to five weeks.

The longer the birth can be delayed the better the chance of a successful outcome, counsel added.



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