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Deputy Bernard Durkan  
Dáil Eireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**28236/19 - To ask the Minister for Health the extent to which orthodontic services are readily made available by all possible means; the extent to which the school medical examinations identifies the need for such services; if the existence of waiting lists impedes the delivery of the service; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Durkan,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question which was submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

School screening can assist in the initial identification of orthodontic treatment need; however, full clinical examination usually involving radiographs is required before a decision can be made about orthodontic referral.

Assessment for Orthodontic Treatment with the HSE's Orthodontic Service is carried out through a clinical examination that includes the use of the Modified Index of Treatment Need (Modified IOTN). Access to treatment with the HSE Orthodontic Service is limited to those children with the most severe and complex orthodontic treatment needs. Referral for orthodontic assessment is usually made in 6th Class.

The HSE Orthodontic Service is provided by 13 WTE Consultant Orthodontists, 45 WTE Orthodontic Specialists and 64 WTE Dental Nurses working in Regional Orthodontic Departments.

The Orthodontic Services are taking all measures possible to address the waiting lists. A waiting list initiative to deal with long waiting times for access to orthodontic treatment commenced in 2016 and to date has enabled treatment for an additional 1,489 of the longest waiting patients

The existence of waiting lists is a result of deficits in capacity. While waiting lists do impact on service delivery, this mostly relates to the management and validation of lists and dealing with enquiries relating to patients waiting for assessment or treatment.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but if you require further clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

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**Joseph Green**  
**AND, National Oral Health Lead - Operations**