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22nd December 2020

Michael Creed T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 42641/20

“To ask the Minister for Health his plans to address lengthy public orthodontic waiting lists at a location (details supplied).”

Details Supplied: The North Lee Kerry Area.

Dear Deputy Creed,

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.

The primary goal of the orthodontic service is to improve the appearance and function of misaligned or crooked teeth, with free orthodontic treatment being provided to children with the most severe orthodontic problems. Qualification for treatment is determined by nationally agreed eligibility guidelines based on an international grading system (IOTN). All referrals for the service are triaged and given a priority rating by the clinical team.

Prior to the pandemic, CKCH had plans to deliver a range of service improvements including the introduction of a centralised wait list to improve equity of access across the CHO and the recruitment of a Consultant Orthodontist for Kerry. While the demand for the service continued to grow, it was hoped that these measures would help to reduce the overall waiting time. These service improvement plans will be reinvigorated in 2021. It is hoped that this, along with treatment initiatives being finalised by the National Oral Health Office, will have a positive impact on the public orthodontic wait lists across CKCH.

The emergence of Covid-19 in Ireland in March 2020 severely disrupted the delivery of health services in Ireland, including the orthodontic service and while services have resumed adherence to infection, prevention, control measures, to reduce the risk of the spread of Covid-19, has resulted in fewer treatments being provided per day. I appreciate the difficulties this creates for those waiting for a service and I acknowledge their continued patience and understanding

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Teresa O' Donovan
Head of Service - Primary Care,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare