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**Deputy Sean Sherlock
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2**

PQ 34449/23: To ask the Minister for Health the number of dentists that have withdrawn from providing medical card services in 2020; and the number of patients it is impacting.

Dear Deputy Sherlock,

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

Adult medical card holders have access to dental services under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme through care provided by private dentists that hold DTSS contracts with the HSE.

As of the 6th November 2020, 161 dentists have withdrawn from the DTSS in 2020. The number of unique patients treated in the previous year through the scheme by each of the dentists that have withdrawn ranges from zero to 1,337. It is difficult to estimate the number of patients impacted by the resignations as the impact varies in different areas. In some areas patients have been accommodated by other dentists but a number of areas report difficulties for patients accessing dental services through the DTSS.

A number of complaints and enquiries have been received by local HSE Dental Services in relation to difficulties encountered by medical card holders accessing dental treatment. Also, a number of representations have been made by public representatives. Each of these complaints and representations is followed up by the local services. Where access is difficult, local services make lists of DTSS contractors available to medical card holders. In the event of the local service being unable to resolve an issue, there is provision in the DTSS contract under the Termination and Disputes clauses to investigate the matter further.

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

Yours Sincerely,

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