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**Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2**

Re: PQ 7704/21: To ask the Minister for Health the reason medical card patients are currently not being seen for emergency medical dental treatment; when emergency dental treatment will be available for medical card holders; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Ó Cuív,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which has been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response.

Adult medical card holders continue to have access to dental services under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme through care provided by private dentists that hold DTSS contracts with the HSE. At present, there are 1,311 private dental contractors with Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS) panel numbers.

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 including emergency treatment. Also, a number of representations have been made by public representatives. Other issues that the HSE is aware of include reports of practices seeking to charge patients for treatment or the use of PPE. 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 and if required make arrangements to provide any necessary emergency dental treatment. 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.

Dentists resigning from the DTSS are required to give three months' notice, and retain all their contractual obligations including seeing patients during this time.

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**