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Deputy Michael Creed  
Dáil Eireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

**Re: PQ 13607/21: To ask the Minister for Health if he has been notified of specific locations in which medical card patients are being denied access to dental treatment; and the steps he plans to take in this regard.**

Dear Deputy Creed,

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. On February 26th 2021 there were 1,273 private dentists with HSE DTSS contracts.

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**