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25 March 2021

**Deputy Alan Kelly
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2**

Re: PQ 13665/21: To ask the Minister for Health the number of dentists who have indicated they plan to leave the medical card system; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Kelly,

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.

In January 2020 there were 1,497 private dentists with HSE Dental Treatment Service Scheme contracts. On February 26th 2021 there were 1,273 private dentists with HSE DTSS contracts. The difference in the number of contractors between January 2020 and February 2021 include resignations/retirements and new entrants to the scheme.

In the past year based on the most recent information to hand, 199 contractors have given notice of resigning from their DTSS contract. The period of notice is three months, during which contractors retain their obligations under the contract.

A Dentist is not obliged to give a reason for resigning from the scheme. However, many contractors have cited the additional practicing costs, including cost of PPE as factors in their decision. Some have stated that they can no longer operate a scheme at a significant business loss.

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

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Green', positioned above a horizontal line.

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