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29 March 2021

Deputy Emer Higgins
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ 14858/21: To ask the Minister for Health if he will consider outsourcing public dental services to private practices in order to lessen waiting times of over seven years for youth orthodontic treatment; and if he will make a statement on the matter..

Dear Deputy Higgins,

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.

In 2015 the Department of Health approved a Treatment Waiting List Initiative, with an allocation of €1million per annum, to target patients who were waiting over 4 years for treatment. Procurement commenced in April 2016, and resulted in 1450 patients being placed with 8 service providers. A further 270 patients were placed with contractors in late 2019, with an additional 276 patients allocated in 2020. In summary, this initiative has placed 1,996 patients in treatment with service providers at a total cost of €5.8m.

A replacement to the current Framework Type Agreement to outsource treatment for Modified IOTN Grade 4 orthodontic patients who have been waiting over 4 years is now at Invitation to Tender stage. Current funding of €1 million per year provides full treatment costs for approximately 300 patients annually through this mechanism.

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', written over a horizontal line.

Joseph Green
AND, National Oral Health Lead - Operations