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Deputy Roisin Shortall
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ 16265/21: To ask the Minister for Health the availability of a cosmetic dentistry grant and criteria for same or financial assistance for urgent orthodontic treatment; and if he will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy Shortall,

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.

Patients and their parents face difficulties in accessing orthodontic treatment with the HSE. These difficulties are expressed through the very high numbers waiting for assessment, and in both the numbers waiting for treatment and the length of time waiting for treatment. The predominant causative factor is lack of treatment capacity in the service.

Orthodontic treatment with the HSE Orthodontic Service is limited to those children with the most severe and complex orthodontic treatment needs. A Modified Index of Treatment Needs (Modified IOTN) system is used to determine if a child can be accepted for treatment.

The HSE does not have provision for cosmetic dentistry grants and therefore does not have criteria through which such grants could be made.

EU Cross Border Directive (CBD)

Access to orthodontic treatment in another EU jurisdiction is available under the EU Cross Border Healthcare Directive for patients that are already on an orthodontic treatment waiting list. The HSE reimburses orthodontic fees up to a maximum of €2,200, or the cost of the treatment abroad, whichever is the lesser. Many patients in border areas have accessed care in Northern Ireland through this route while the UK was a member of the European Union. Arrangements for access to orthodontic treatment in line with the CBD have continued through the Northern Ireland Planned HealthCare Scheme.

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