



29 June 2021

Deputy Patricia Ryan  
Dáil Eireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

**23361/21: To ask the Minister for Health if he will carry out an audit in counties Kildare, Laois and Offaly on the availability of dentists for those with medical cards with a view to addressing the inability of patients to find a dentist accepting public patients; and if he will make a statement on the matter**

Dear Deputy Ryan,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted for response.

I wish to advise the Deputy that the number private dentists participating in the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS) in Counties Kildare, Laois and Offaly is outlined in Table 1 below. Please note in some instances data is available by Local Health Office (LHO) area and not by County as requested. The number of contractors include resignations/retirements and new entrants to the scheme.

Local Health Office (LHO) Area	No of DTSS Private Dentists	Resignations since week ending 06/03/2020	New Applications being processed currently
LHO 6 – Kildare/West Wicklow	47	7	5
LHO 8 – Laois/Offaly	24	10	3

**Table 1: Private Dentists participating in the DTSS in LHO Area 6 and 8**

The HSE is aware that some medical card holders have experienced difficulties in accessing dental treatment under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme.


Where this is made known to the HSE, each enquiry and representation is followed up by local community services who seek to assist medical card holders.

In the course of 2020, services were curtailed for a period due to Covid-19 restrictions. Revised infection prevention and control measures have reduced throughput in dental practices. A number of dental contractors have resigned from the scheme, which has also affected access for patients.

As well as assisting medical card holders, the HSE is working closely with the Department of Health in relation to the operation of the scheme, and addressing difficulties faced by some patients accessing services.

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

Yours Sincerely,



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