

30th November, 2021

Deputy Sean Sherlock T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 57762/21

“To ask the Minister for Health the number of dentists with medical card contracts in each of the CHO 4 sub sections in each of the years 2016 to 2021, respectively in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Sherlock,

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

The Primary Care Dental Services team provides dental treatment to eligible children, medical card holders, special needs clients and others in the care of the HSE at various locations throughout Cork and Kerry.

Children under 16 years of age are treated in HSE dental clinics and adults are treated by private dental practitioners contracted to the Health Service Executive under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS). Unfortunately, in recent months there has been a significant reduction in access to the DTSS for medical card holders in Cork and Kerry as dentists who hold contracts under DTSS have either resigned their contracts or are not accepting new patients at this time.

Number of dentists with medical card contracts in each year

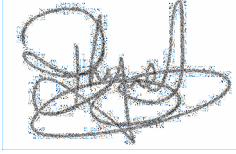
CHO 04	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
South Lee - LHO 24	106	112	106	104	99	89	-17
North Lee - LHO 25	124	123	121	117	119	120	-4
West Cork - LHO 26	25	25	24	25	25	26	+1
Kerry - LHO 27	58	55	46	36	32	24	-34
North Cork - LHO 28	45	43	39	38	38	37	-8

Currently there are fewer dentists participating in the DTSS scheme than there were before the Covid -19 pandemic. As a result, there is an increased demand for care on the private dentists who continue to operate the scheme. In addition many dentists who remain operating the Scheme are not taking on new patients.

A more long term solution will require engagement at a national level between the various stakeholders.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Priscilla Lynch', enclosed in a thin blue rectangular border.

Priscilla Lynch
Head of Service, Primary Care
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare