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**03 November 2021**

**Deputy Paul Donnelly  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2**

**PQ 50664/21: To ask the Minister for Health the primary care centres or health centres that are currently accepting emergency walk in dentistry services in tabular form.**

Dear Deputy Donnelly,

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.

Emergency care for the relief of pain (e.g. toothache) and infection is available on a same day/following day basis for all children aged up to 15 years, and patients with Special Needs in all HSE Dental Clinics. Due to revised infection prevention and control procedures introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic, patients/parents are asked to make initial contact with clinics by telephone, to avoid walk-in situations and crowded waiting areas. Emergency appointments are scheduled by HSE staff.

Large numbers of children require relief of pain and infection as a consequence of dental decay; treatment can involve fillings and extractions, prescription of antibiotics, and referral to hospital for dental extractions under General Anaesthesia. The numbers presenting (approximately 70,000 child attendances for emergency treatment in 2019), and the extent of their needs, indicate that dental decay remains a significant public health problem in Ireland.

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.

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**