



Oifig an Príomhoifigeach, Eagraíocht  
Cúram Sláinte Pobail, Lár Tíre, An Lú,  
An Mhí Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse  
Sláinte, Oifig Cheantair, Bóthar  
Ardáin, An Tulach Mhór, Co. Uíbh  
Fhailí.

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6<sup>th</sup> October, 2021

Ms Carol Nolan T.D.,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**Re: Parliamentary Question – 44627/21**

**To ask the Minister for Health the reason dentists in Birr and Ferbane, County Offaly are refusing to take on persons in receipt of medical cards; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Carol Nolan**

Dear Deputy Nolan

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. I have examined the matter and I outline the position as follows.

The Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS) has seen many resignations nationally which has been widely published on national media. As a result, many patients are currently unable to access dental care in their immediate locality and must travel within or outside their home county to access dental care with a participating DTSS contracted dentist. In the period 20/09/20 to 23/09/21 there have been thirty three (33) resignations of Dental surgeon contractors from the DTSS HSE Midlands region. There are currently forty eight (48) remaining practices across the Midlands region, thirteen (13) of which are operating within counties Laois and Offaly. Of those practices who continue to provide dental care for eligible DTSS patients, many have been unable to take on any additional patients as they simply do not have the capacity to meet the ever increasing demand. Also of note, there are currently no new applications being processed to join the DTSS with the HSE dental Midlands area.

Midlands HSE Principal Dental Surgeon have not received to date, any communications from a patient indicating they have been refused access to a DTSS participating dental practice in Birr or Ferbane. If and when this occurs Principal Dental Surgeon can address the issue to the relevant practice. Patients who currently have a difficulty accessing a Dental Surgeon in Birr or Ferbane, may need to travel to a nearby town to source a DTSS contractor and the required dental care.

I trust that the above is in order but please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Des O'Flynn', written over a horizontal line.

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Des O'Flynn  
Chief Officer  
Midlands Louth Meath Community Health Organisation