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**21 April 2022**

**Deputy Réada Cronin  
Dáil Eireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2**

**PQ 19094/22: To ask the Minister for Health if he will examine the situation in which residents in State-run nursing homes are spending long periods of time on antibiotics for oral and dental infection in lieu of receiving the necessary dental intervention this being of further note in the context of antibiotic resistance; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Cronin,

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.

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

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.

Covid-19 restrictions also curtailed access for dentists in attending nursing homes to provide care, and restrictions on residents leaving nursing homes to access care, but with the easing of restrictions access to care is expected to improve.

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

Oral and dental infections need to be managed by accessing a dentist to have the required procedure undertaken. Repeated use of antibiotics without accessing appropriate dental treatment contributes to antimicrobial resistance and is not the optimal management of a dental infection.

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

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe', is positioned above a horizontal line.

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