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**Deputy Claire Kerrane
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2**

PQ Number 60942/22: To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide an update on the dental treatment scheme; the number of dentists active in the scheme by county; the number of dentists who having previously left the scheme have returned by county; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Kerrane,

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 reply.

Adult medical card holders have access to dental services under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS) through care provided by private dentists and clinical dental technicians that hold DTSS contracts with the HSE.

The number of independent Dental Contractors contracted by the HSE to provide services to the eligible population declined from 1,657 at the end of 2016 to 1,490 in December 2019. The number of independent DTSS contract holders further reduced to 1,354 In December 2020 and to 1,151 in December 2021. Currently 1,054 private dentists and clinical dental technicians hold a DTSS contract with the HSE.

The HSE is aware that some medical card holders have experienced difficulties in accessing dental treatment under the DTSS. 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 2020 a total of 176 resignations were recorded. During 2021 the HSE was notified of 93 resignations from the DTSS. In the same period there were also 98 other exits recorded and 93 new DTSS contracts issued. So far this year 60 resignations and 47 other exits have been recorded and 48 new contracts have been issued.

On 1st May 2022 a number of changes and fee adjustments were introduced in the DTSS to support the scheme. These included an expansion in the definition of the Examination item with a corresponding fee increase and reintroduction of Scale and Polish. There were also significant increases in fees for certain treatment items including restorations, routine extractions and dentures.

The number of DTSS contractors at end December 2021 and end of April 2022 (prior to above changes) and end November 2022 is detailed in the attached Excel Sheet and is available by Local Health Office (LHO) and not by county as requested. The difference in the number of contractors between December 2021 and November 2022 include resignations/retirements and new entrants to the scheme.

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