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10 March 2022

**Deputy Rose Conway Walsh
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2**

PQ 8107/22: To ask the Minister for Health the controls or checks that are in place to ensure that dentists in the dental treatment services scheme are accepting new medical card patients; the number of dentists that are accepting new medical card patients in each county in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy Conway Walsh,

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.

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

The DTSS is a “choice of dentist” scheme which does not require the patient to register with a particular dentist and enables medical card holders to attend any DTSS contractor directly without recourse to the HSE. The list of participating dentists is managed by each local HSE area and is collated nationally. Contractors that have not resigned or retired are expected to treat eligible adults.

The number of dentists that hold HSE Dental Treatment Service Scheme contracts is not available by county as requested but is available by Local Health Office (LHO). The data is detailed in the attached Excel Sheet by LHO as at end February 2022. (Note: contractors who have resigned but are still serving their 3 months’ notice period are included in the list as they are required to participate in the scheme for this period.)

DTSS Claims are processed through the HSE's Primary Care Reimbursement Service. In any single month, just over 60% of these dentists make a DTSS claim.

The HSE is aware that some medical card holders have had difficulties accessing the service. Where access to a dentist is difficult, local HSE Dental Services assist patients who make enquires and make lists of DTSS contractors available to medical card holders. In exceptional circumstances, where eligible adults could not access a dentist through the DTSS, they have had emergency treatment provided directly by the HSE. In the event of the local service being unable to resolve an issue, there is provision in the DTSS contract under the Termination and Disputes clauses to investigate the matter further.

As well as assisting medical card holders, the HSE is working closely with the Department of Health in relation to the operation of the scheme, and addressing difficulties faced by some patients accessing services.

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