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Private and Confidential

Deputy Pa Daly, TD,
Dail Eireann,
Dublin 2.

17th February 2022

PQ Ref: 5604/22 HSE Dentists – Kerry.

Details supplied: “To ask the Minister for Health if he will hire additional HSE dentists in County Kerry to address the growing need for public dental care for adults and children; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”

Dear Deputy Daly,

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.

The Primary Care Dental Service provides dental treatment to eligible children, medical card holders, special needs clients and others in the care of the HSE at various locations throughout Cork and Kerry. Children under 16 years of age are treated in HSE dental clinics and adults are treated by private dental practitioners contracted to the Health Services under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS). People who are categorised as high risk, for example: people with specified medical conditions, or special care needs adults, can avail of more extensive dental care.

Currently all vacant dental surgeon posts in Co. Kerry are filled and this comprises a compliment of 12 dental surgeons across various grades. Local management is currently working on improving the efficiency of existing resources to help address service delays arising from the COVID-19 Pandemic and if, following this, additional resources are required then business cases will be prepared for the recruitment of additional staff as is standard procedure.

There are particular issues with the HSE dental service for adults i.e. the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS). This issue is a nationwide problem and is not unique to Kerry. A significant number of private general dental practitioners have resigned from the Scheme and many of the general dental practitioners still operating the scheme have restricted access and are seeing existing patients only.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Priscilla Lynch
Head of Service - Primary Care,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare