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**18 February 2022**

**Deputy Fergus O' Dowd  
Dáil Eireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2**

**PQ 6653/22: To ask the Minister for Health the number of dental practitioners participating in the dental treatment services scheme in January 2021 and in January 2022, by county in tabuar form; the total waiting list of patients by each county in January 2021 and January 2022; the category of each such patient including special needs patients and children and high risk categories; the emergency waiting list for the scheme by category and waiting time by month for January 2021 and January 2022; the number of dentists and other staff employed directly by the HSE in each such county for January 2021 and January 2022 in the provision of the dental treatment services scheme in January; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy O' Dowd,

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 and clinical dental technicians that hold DTSS contracts with the HSE. I wish to advise the Deputy that the HSE does not collect and monitor any data relating to waiting lists for dental treatment provided under the Dental Treatment Service Scheme (DTSS). The DTSS is based on '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 number of dentists participating in the DTSS in January 2021 and January 2022 is detailed in the attached Excel Sheet. The data is not available by county as requested but is available by Local Health Office (LHO). The difference in the number of contractors between each year include resignations/retirements and new entrants to the scheme.

(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.)

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 relation to your request for the number of dentist are other staff directly employed by the HSE in the provided, please note the HSE does not directly employ any staff for the sole provision of services under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme. The basis of contractors providing services for the DTSS is outlined above.

The directly employed staff in HSE dental services are mainly tasked with treatment of children up to the age of 15 and patients with special needs.

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

Yours Sincerely,



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