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**08 February 2022**

**Deputy Matt Carthy  
Dáil Eireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2**

**PQ 3033/22: To ask the Minister for Health the reason for the delay in creating the HSE grade of orthodontic therapist; the steps he has taken to expedite the creation of such a grade; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Carthy,

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.

Orthodontic Therapists are dental health professionals recognised in Ireland by the Dental Council. The introduction of the grade of Orthodontic Therapist is an option being explored by the HSE for future delivery models.

The employment of Orthodontic Therapists will provide HSE services with greater flexibility in the provision, location and delivery of treatment. The recognition of the role of Orthodontic Therapist within the HSE Orthodontic service has the potential to reduce waiting lists and increase access to high quality, cost effective patient care. It will bring considerable increases in patient flow and will have positive impacts on KPIs, waiting times and the numbers waiting. The development of improved skill mix in the orthodontic services will also reduce treatment waiting times for more complex cases.

The HSE has piloted the deployment of Orthodontic Therapists in two service areas. Evaluation of the impact on services of this pilot programme was carried out, and showed that the combination of the specialist orthodontist and the orthodontic therapist were able to see 85% more patients per day than the specialist working on his/her own.

The recognition of Orthodontic Therapists is in line with the National Oral Health Policy Smile agus Sláinte, which seeks to foster “*a culture of team working across the dental healthcare team . . . , coupled with maximising the use of skill mix.*”

In Q2 2021, the HSE made a submission to the Department of Health for formal recognition of the grade of Orthodontic Therapist.

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 Green', written over a horizontal line.

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