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**Deputy Bernard Durkan
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2**

PQ 8417/22: To ask the Minister for Health the extent to which orthodontic services are being made available evenly throughout the country; the areas of greatest need in this regard at present; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Durkan,

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.

The HSE Orthodontic Service is provided in Regional Orthodontic Units. Access to treatment with the HSE Orthodontic Service is limited to those children with the most severe and complex orthodontic treatment needs. Referral for orthodontic assessment is usually made in 6th Class. The Modified Index of Treatment Needs (Modified IOTN) system is used in all regions to determine if a child will be accepted for treatment. There are a number of categories within the Modified IOTN system, and these are used to prioritise care, children whose treatment need is assessed as being in Grade 4 or Grade 5 of the Index are offered treatment with the HSE.

The latest KPI data for the number of patients waiting for Orthodontic Treatment at end Q1 2022 by Regional Orthodontic Unit is detailed in Appendix 1.

Patients and their parents face difficulties in accessing orthodontic treatment with the HSE. These difficulties are expressed through the very high numbers waiting for assessment, and in both the numbers waiting for treatment and the length of time waiting for treatment. The predominant causative factor is lack of treatment capacity in the service.

In 2015 the Department of Health approved a Treatment Waiting List Initiative, with an allocation of €1million per annum, to target patients who were waiting over 4 years for treatment. In summary, between 2016-2020, this initiative placed 1,996 patients in treatment with service providers.

The National Oral Health Office in conjunction with HBS concluded a successor procurement arrangement with private service providers for the period 2021-2024 for the provision of treatment of patients assessed as Grade 4, waiting in excess of 4 years with immediate priority given to those waiting longest. Under the successor arrangement 1048 patients have so far transferred to private service providers. These cohort of patients include 690 patients had been placed in treatment with external service providers in late 2021, with a further 630 patients allocated to external service providers so far in 2022.

Additional National Initiatives underway to address Orthodontic waiting lists include:

- Recruitment of additional Consultant Orthodontist and Specialist Orthodontists
- Proposed recruitment and deployment of Orthodontic Therapists.
- Prioritisation of care: All orthodontic services prioritise the provision of care for those patients identified as having the greatest needs and the highest risk of developing dental disease.

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



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Appendix 1: Orthodontic Treatment Waiting Lists by Category Grade Modified IOTN and Wait Band Q1 2022

GRADE 4 Modified IOTN	1-6 months	7-12 months	13-24 months	25-36 months	37 - 48 months	48+ months	Totals
Former East Coast (Loughlinstown)	39.0	1.0	33.0	13.0	10.0	0.0	96.0
Midlands	64.0	52.0	11.0	182.0	115.0	258.0	682.0
DNE	16.0	40.0	20.0	18.0	43.0	26.0	163.0
South	130.0	82.0	83.0	588.0	355.0	177.0	1,415.0
South East	77.0	111.0	42.0	160.0	187.0	410.0	987.0
Mid Western	47.0	61.0	46.0	119.0	110.0	53.0	436.0
Western	177.0	46.0	3.0	403.0	101.0	0.0	730.0
	550.0	393.0	238.0	1,483.0	921.0	924.0	4,509.0

GRADE 5 Modified IOTN	1-6 months	7-12 months	13-24 months	25-36 months	37 - 48 months	48+ months	Totals
Former East Coast (Loughlinstown)	48.0	71.0	148.0	131.0	105.0	28.0	531.0
Midlands	103.0	35.0	4.0	65.0	22.0	25.0	254.0
DNE	411.0	367.0	436.0	121.0	157.0	207.0	1,699.0
South	180.0	86.0	84.0	557.0	319.0	83.0	1,309.0
South East	124.0	147.0	78.0	244.0	282.0	511.0	1,386.0
Mid Western	66.0	111.0	51.0	135.0	151.0	53.0	567.0
Western	226.0	74.0	37.0	292.0	37.0	0.0	666.0
	1,158.0	891.0	838.0	1,545.0	1,073.0	907.0	6,412.0