



Oifig an Príomhoifigeach
Eagraíocht Cúram Sláinte Pobail Lár Tire,
An Lú, An Mhí

Oifig na bPríomhoifigeach, An Chéad Urlár,
Coimhleasc Naomh Bríd, Bóthar Cheanannais
Bhaile Átha Fhirdia, Co Lú, A92 DRN0

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2nd May 2023

Deputy Fergus O'Dowd,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 17517/23 - To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide an update on any discussions between his Department and the Irish Dental Association on further revision of the dental treatment service scheme; the plans his Department and the HSE have to ensure that patients in Louth and Meath who have medical cards receive the timely treatment they need in the interim; if he will provide the most recent figures on the number of registered dentists in the scheme in both Louth and Meath as of 1 April 2023; and if he will make a statement on the matter - Fergus O'Dowd

Dear Deputy O'Dowd,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Representative, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and outlined the position as follows.

The Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS) has seen many resignations nationally which has been widely published on national media. As a result, many patients are currently unable to access dental care in their immediate locality and must travel within or outside their home county to access dental care with a participating DTSS contracted dentist.

Of those practices who continue to provide dental care for eligible DTSS patients, many have been unable to take on any additional patients as they simply do not have the capacity to meet the ever increasing demand. Also of note, there are currently no new applications being processed to join the DTSS with the HSE Louth Meath area.

The DTSS contractor numbers have fallen over the past number of years, as outlined in the table below, the figures show the numbers of individual contracts held in both counties.

	LOUTH	MEATH	TOTAL DTSS CONTRACTS
2019	28	33	61
2020	19	25	44
2021	15	14	29
2022	15	10	25



With resignations of dental contractors exiting the DTSS, the Public Dental Service now must also provide emergency care to adult medical card holders who are unable to access treatment within the community. The HSE Dental Service has continuously assisted patients in seeking dental care from participating DTSS contractors.

Currently, there are 25 DTSS contractors providing care to medical care holders in counties Louth and Meath. To date, of those who have resigned from the scheme previously none have returned to the scheme since the recent amendments to the contract.

I trust the above is in order but please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Broadbank'.

Carole Broadbank
Acting Chief Officer
Midlands Louth Meath Community Health Organisation