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**Deputy Michael Lowry
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2**

PQ 63544/22: To ask the Minister for Health the number of dental practices in County Tipperary which have ceased providing medical card services in the past five years; the medical card dental services that currently available to medical card users; the provision that is in place for those whose local dentist withdraws from the provision of medical card services in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Lowry,

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 that hold DTSS contracts with the HSE. If someone is over 16 years and has a current medical card then that person is entitled to free dental treatment from any of the Dentists on the DTSS list. This list is available at local HSE Dental clinics and online at HSE Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS) Online Services.

I wish to advise the Deputy that the data is not available as requested. The table below details the number of DTSS contractors in Local Health Offices North Tipperary/East Limerick and South Tipperary. The difference in the number of contractors between each year include resignations/retirements and new entrants to the scheme.

Year	LHO 22 North Tipp/East Limerick	LHO 31 South Tipperary
2018	25	25
2019	26	24
2020	26	24
2021	26	23
2022	24	19

In any one calendar year entitlement includes:

- A Dental examination including any necessary x rays
- Scale and polish (cleaning)
- Two restorations (fillings) as clinically necessary
- Extractions (as many as necessary)
- Root canal treatment (restricted to front teeth only)
- Denture repairs
- Dentures (need prior approval)

Patients who are deemed Exceptional or High Risk have an expanded range of treatments available to them. Access to these treatments requires approval by the HSE of an application from the patient's dentist.

This includes (for Exceptional /High Risk):

- Prolonged Periodontal Treatment
- Second scale and polish (cleaning) after 6 months in a calendar year
- More than two restorations (fillings) in a calendar year

If a patient has difficulty accessing such treatment through the DTSS he/she should contact their local HSE dental service.

On 1st May 2022 a number of changes and fee adjustments were introduced in the DTSS to support the scheme. These included an expansion in the definition of the Examination item with a corresponding fee increase and reintroduction of Scale and Polish. There were also significant increases in fees for many treatment items including restorations, routine extractions and dentures.

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