

24th January 2023

Seán Canney
St. David's
The Mall
Tuam
County Galway

PQ 63546/22

To ask the Minister for Health the number of dental practices in County Galway which have ceased providing medical card services to persons with disabilities in the past five years; the medical card dental services that are currently available to adult persons with disabilities; the provisions in place for those whose local dentist withdraws from the provision of medical card services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Canney,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Special needs medical holders have the same access to the Dental Treatment Service Scheme (DTSS) as all medical card holders. Service users with complex disabilities are seen and treated by HSE dentists for specialist treatment.

The number of dental practices in Galway that have withdrawn from the DTSS in the past five years is 9.

There are currently 22 Dentists in Galway who hold DTSS contracts, and they are all advising they are at full capacity and unable to take on new patients at this time.

Nationally, many dentists have left the scheme and negotiations are taking place between Dental Representative bodies, Department of Health and the HSE. The online and paper based system of applications for extra treatment items, as allowed for on the DTSS, continues which indicates patients with extra clinical concerns (medical and intellectual disabilities) are being seen by contractors.

In emergency cases and/or where a Medical Card holder cannot access a contractor and they are in pain, they have been accommodated in our service, however our service is primarily for children and we are not resourced to treat the additional population of medical card holders for courses of treatment.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Mary Warde
Head of Primary Care
Community Healthcare West