



**Cúram Sláinte
Phobail, Iarthar**
ag freastal ar Ghailimh,
Maighéo agus Ros Comáin

**Community
Healthcare West**
serving Galway, Mayo
and Roscommon

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Ceannasaí na Seirbhísí Bunchúraim
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24th January 2023

Noel Grealish TD,
Briarhill Business Park,
Briarhill,
Galway.

PQ 63665/22

To ask the Minister for Health the number of dental practices in Galway city and the rest of County Galway which have ceased providing medical card services to people with disabilities in the past ten years; the medical card dental services currently available to adult persons with disabilities; the provision 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 Grealish,

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 card 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The number of dental practices in Galway that have withdrawn from the DTSS in the past ten years is 10 and the number of dentists that have withdrawn from the DTSS in the last 10 years is 26.

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 Services
Community Healthcare West