



10<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Deputy Barry Heneghan TD,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2

Ref: PQ 8160/25

**To ask the Minister for Health to examine the impact of changes in dental practice at Dublin Dental University Hospital (DDUH), specifically the way the practice has adopted the approach which prioritises patients based on the suitability for teaching need; and if she will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Heneghan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The Dublin Dental University Hospital (DDUH) is a teaching hospital and does not provide routine dental services to the community. The DDUH provides training for undergraduate and postgraduate dental students, dental nurses, dental hygienists, dental technicians, orthodontic therapists and clinical dental technologists. I confirm there has been no changes to services available to patients, which are aligned to educational and training:

- **Accident and Emergency** - Walk in and Out of hours dental service – 7 days a week.
- **Secondary Care** – Dental care provided by undergraduate and postgraduate students. Services range from basic dental care to more advanced care. Patients do not need a referral for this service. However, due to the service demand, waiting times are long and allocation for treatment is based on an available student requiring the dental education.
- **Specialist & Tertiary Care** - Services provided by Consultants and multi-disciplinary dental teams. Most of the treatments provided under this remit are not normally available elsewhere. Examples include treatments for oncology patients (including pre cancer treatment dental needs and post cancer reconstruction), special needs patients (severe hypodontia, amelogenesis imperfect, dentinogenesis imperfect, developmental disorders etc, special care patients (patients who have special needs and would be unable to attend a general dental practice), Oral Medicine and pathology, Oral Surgery and Maxillofacial surgery. A referral from a General Dental Practitioner is required for all specialist and tertiary care at DDUH.



**Ceannasaí Seirbhíse Cúram Príomhúil**  
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Patients who are seeking urgent dental treatment can do so via public HSE services:

- Free dental services are available to adults over 16 years with a medical card through the Dental Treatment Service Scheme (DTSS) via private dentists.
- HSE Dental Clinics, who provide services for children of school-going age. This service is accessed through screening appointments in the child's primary school.

Patients deemed eligible for treatment in DDUH through teaching programmes, are prioritised based on urgency and resources available.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

**Fiona Hammond**  
**Interim Head of Service, Primary Care**  
**HSE Dublin South and Wicklow**