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Mr. Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2.

PQ ref 24119/25

"To ask the Minister for Health the number of dental practices that are currently accepting new medical card patients in the Cork area and the south Lee area as of now, and at this same point in 2024, 2023 and 2022; and if she will make a statement on the matter".

PQ ref 24120/25

"To ask the Minister for Health the number of individual dentists in dental practices that are currently accepting new medical card patients in the Cork area and the south Lee area as of now, and at this same point in 2024,2023 and 2022; and if she will make a statement on the matter".

Dear Deputy Ó Laoghaire,

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

The HSE Primary Care Dental Service provides dental treatment to eligible children, medical card holders, adults and children with special needs and others in the care of the HSE at various locations throughout Cork and Kerry. under 16 years of age are treated in HSE dental clinics and adults are treated by private dental practitioners contracted to the Health Services under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS).

Unfortunately, it is very difficult for the HSE to ascertain how many dentists are actually seeing new medical card patients in any given period of time. The number of dentists taking on new patients is likely to change regularly. However, the number of phone calls that HSE dental services are currently receiving from medical card patients who are trying to access dental care under the scheme, seems to have reduced in recent months. Access to dental care for medical card patients under the scheme is still a significant issue. Patients may have to travel further for treatment or unfortunately wait longer for an appointment. However, given the reduced number of queries, it would appear that the situation in Cork has stabilised with a slight improvement.

Area	Number of Dentists with assigned panel numbers in the DTSS scheme May 2023	Number of Dentists with assigned panel numbers in the DTSS scheme May 2024	Number of Dentists with assigned panel numbers in the DTSS scheme May 2025
South Lee	82	60	63
North Lee	106	81	81
West Cork	27	19	19
Kerry	20	19	19
North Cork	31	28	29
Totals	266	207	211



If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

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