



Oifig Náisiúnta Sláinte Béal,
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Deputy Peadar Tóibín
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ 25547/25: To ask the Minister for Health whether she was aware that there are very few dentist offices that are available in Ireland to wheelchair users who have a medical card; the actions being taken to address this issue as it has come to this deputies attention that many are being sent to Newry for treatment, obviously this is a very long travel for people with mobility issues; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Tóibín,

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.

There are a range of schemes which provide financial support to patients accessing dental care which may be geographically associated with Northern Ireland. The HSE makes dental services available to adults with full eligibility through the Dental Treatment Services Scheme, which enables medical card holders to attend contracted dentists- the scheme has a list of treatment items which are funded through the scheme. The DTSS is a “choice of dentist” scheme for patients, which does not require the patient to register with a particular dentist and enables medical card holders to attend any DTSS contractor directly without recourse to the HSE. There are approximately 800 contracted dentists within the scheme. Where a patient has difficulty accessing the scheme, they are advised to contact their local HSE Principal Dental Surgeon as the clinical manager of the scheme.

The Northern Ireland Planned Healthcare Scheme (and its predecessor Cross Border Scheme) enabled reimbursement for healthcare purchased in Northern Ireland. Unlike the DTSS (of which there are no contracted clinicians in Northern Ireland), patients choose the practice and pay for treatment, with reimbursement rates being governed by the terms and conditions of the scheme.

Separately, the National Oral Health Office has an orthodontic framework in place which is supported by waiting list initiative funding. The framework utilises contracted orthodontic clinicians to increase capacity for treatment to those on HSE waiting lists. While the majority of clinicians contracted to the framework are within the republic, there is one practice in Northern Ireland who are contracted to provide care. Referral of patients to contracted clinics is undertaken with the agreement of the patient.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but if you require further clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

Anne O'Neill
Assistant National Director, Oral Health