



Clip Book

(July 11, 2022)

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KCLR LIVE: Friday 8th July 2022

LISTEN BACK HERE KCLR LIVE: Caroline Robbins, President of The [Irish Dental Association](#) and of KIWI Dental, Carlow on the disparity of prices in dental surgeries discovered by research from the Irish Independent. Dr. Mary McCreery, a dietician, gives us some tips on how to avoid summer splurging on holidays.


Catherine Cooney of Kilkenny County Council tells us about a Commemoration event that is happening at Kilkenny Castle on Sunday, 10th of July. She tells John about some plans they have in place for the Kilkenny team homecoming after the All Ireland Senior Hurling Championship Final.

Tommy Fleming chats with John ahead of his concert in Rathwood on the 15th of July.

Cathal Nolan of Ireland's Weather Channel gives us an insight into what the weekend weather will look like.

Caroline and Corina Dillon moved into Jenkinstown House two weeks before COVID-19 restrictions started. They remind us of the beautiful premises that is there and tell us what it has to offer for events.

Our Friday Panel this week is Cllr. Deirdre Cullen, Kilkenny Mayor David Fitzgerald and KCLR Live Producer Ethna Quirke look back on the big stories of the week.

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Local dentist patients paying between €50 and €120 for a filling

Thursday, July 7th, 2022 3:08pm By Simon Doyle @simondoyle_ There's a big range of costs for the practice nationwide.


A survey of dental costs has uncovered significant variations between counties and even surgeries in the same area.

Dublin had the highest price for a filling, costing patients €170 at a surgery in Blackrock, compared to €35 in Donegal.

The research from the Irish Independent also found that in Co. Louth, patients can pay anywhere between €50 and €120 for a filling.

While it ranges between €50 and €110 in practices across Co. Meath.

Chief executive of the [Irish Dental Association](#), Fintan Hourihane , says Covid is one of the reasons behind higher prices:

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Newstalk @ 08-Jul-2022 06:15 - (Irish)

Donegal, big, big variations. Today the IMDO looks as dental tourism because we're told it's booming again after the pandemic. Many **Irish** people are choosing to travel abroad for treatment. A lot of going to Turkey, apparently for us and we are told that there is a big, big boost some that the Indo interview want to break the stigma. The dental practices abroad or not of the same quality as in Ireland, so they have an interview with one clinic in budapest there who say that it's all very successful both defence and her him from the **Irish** dental Association says that before going abroad. People should consult with their local dentist and I will say I have seen videos on social media of people have gone to Turkey. Some people and they've had a bad experience. Others have had a very good experience but buyer beware and make sure that you know what you're getting yourself involved in a particular what the aftercare is going to be, it's grand, getting the surgery but if the problems with it. Do you have to fly back to Turkey and what sort of protection. Do you have a final story comes from the Daily mirror this morning. If you're a parent, do you sing lullabies to your children well traditional lullabies are in danger of being forgotten by mums and dads. Researchers have found the classics like Rocco bye baby Humpty Dumpty and Jack and Jill which have sent generations of children into the Land of Nod are unfamiliar to 6 in 10 parents, according to a poll of 2000 parents. one in 10 did not signal a buys because of a terrible voice and a third use soothers on 9 and 10, read a bedtime story and said how difficult is it to know the lyrics to twinkle twinkle little star anyway. A lot of parents sensing it those the stories, making the headlines still to come. Is the Government lacking ambition when it comes to delivering remote working breakfast briefing on Newstalk On the Record with Gavan Reilly, I would have assumed with the dearth of clinicians that they would be on the critical skills list. It's only now, the HSE are putting them on so you're an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist, or even a speech and language service that even if there was such a chronic shortage of those rows they weren't actually considered to be ring fenced as being critically necessary are not should be prioritised for agreement that's correct on the Record with Gavan Reilly, brought to you by PwC at on the record with me. Gavan Reilly, Sunday, at 11 a Newstalk discover a huge range and shop the biggest brands in the Harvey Norman half yearly clearance with great deals across a range of Nespresso coffee machines claim your free barista bundle and 6 months of coffee subscription for half price. When you buy selected virtual coffee machines, enjoy a big mug of quality coffee with this press event duo, with prices starting from as little as 119 EUR. With our best prices guaranteed in store and online only at Harvey Norman half yearly clearance while stocks last. These pay see in-store or online. For full details. We are all looking forward to a great summer enjoying the outdoors, but let's do it responsibly. We can all play our part to protect their shirts basis by respecting nature and Environment weather hiking picnicking heading to the beach are walking the dog. Plan ahead and prepare for your day. That way we leave our airspace is as we find them for everyone to enjoy. Let all love this place and leave no Trace. Brought to you by leave no Trace Ireland and partners breakfast briefing this his Newstalk and you're listening to breakfast briefing here on Newstalk with methane BT context 5.1 0 6 at a cost of 30 cent they were expecting



Experts urge caution when travelling for dental work

Aoife Breslin

DENTAL tourism is booming again, with many Irish people choosing to travel abroad for treatment.

Dental clinics across Europe have noted a surge in bookings from Irish customers since the lifting of Covid-19 travel restrictions.

Yesterday, the *Herald* revealed huge variations in cost for people seeking dental work in Ireland – and the price difference can be even greater when travelling abroad.

Mary Flanagan, the Irish representative for Kreativ

Dental in Budapest, wants to break the stigma that dental practices abroad are not of the same quality.

Ms Flanagan's experience at Kreativ Dental was a success, having had her implants for 18 years and never having had an issue with them.

She is now helping patients with travel, appointments, liaising with the clinic and aftercare help.

"I love it because I have been to the clinic, I have done it. I trust in them, I believe in them and for people going over I know I am sending them to a good clinic," she said.

But she believes an aftercare service in Ireland is an important factor to look into when travelling abroad for dental work, in the unfortunate case that something goes wrong.

Demand

"I believe every dentist abroad should have an aftercare dentist in Ireland, because if something goes wrong it puts patients at ease that they don't have to travel to get a check-up," she said.

"There is a demand with people going abroad now to get their teeth done.

"In February or March this year the demand became huge, and I mean huge.

"The price does play a huge part in why people go abroad, let's be honest, but in saying that I really do believe that Kreativ Dental would not be in business as long as it has been if the quality wasn't good."

Irish Dental Association CEO Fintan Hourihan said that before going abroad, people should consult with their local dentist.

"We do think that there are the highest standards of dental care here in Ireland, but what we would say to members of the public is to make an

appointment with their local dentist to find out precisely what they need as opposed to what they may think they need," he said.

"Secondly the dental council has a website, dentalcouncil.ie, that has a very good document on choosing your dentist, whether it's here in Ireland or abroad."

According to Mr Hourihan, the Irish Dental Association has not been made aware of any increase in the numbers of people travelling for dental work and is concerned by some of the dental treatment people receive abroad.



Surge in numbers going abroad for treatment in dental clinics



Experts urge caution as many patients seek overseas dental treatments to save on cost

Aoife Breslin

DENTAL tourism is booming again after the pandemic, with many Irish people choosing to travel abroad for treatment – most commonly to Turkey.

Earlier this year it was reported that dental clinics across Europe have noted a surge in bookings from Irish customers since the lifting of Covid-19 travel restrictions.

Yesterday the *Irish Independent* revealed huge variations in cost for people seeking dental work in Ireland – and the price difference can be even greater when travelling abroad.

Mary Flanagan, the Irish representative for Kreativ Dental in Budapest, wants to break the stigma that dental practices abroad are not of the same quality as in Ireland.

Ms Flanagan's experience at

Kreativ Dental was a success, having had her implants for 18 years and never having had an issue with them. She is now helping patients with travel, appointments, liaising with the clinic and aftercare help.

"I love it because I have been to the clinic, I have done it, I trust in them. I believe in them and for people going over I know I am sending them to a good clinic," she said.

But she believes an aftercare service in Ireland is an important factor to look into when travelling abroad for dental work, in the unfortunate case that something goes wrong.

"I believe every dentist abroad should have an aftercare dentist in Ireland, because if something goes wrong it puts patients at ease that they don't have to travel to get a check-up," she said.

Ms Flanagan believes that

since the lifting of Covid restrictions, the demand for dental work abroad has increased.

"There is a demand with people going abroad now to get their teeth done... in February or March this year the demand became huge, and I mean huge," she said.

"The price does play a huge part in why people go abroad, let's be honest, but in saying that I really do believe that Kreativ Dental would not be in business as long as it has been if the quality wasn't good."

Fintan Hourihan, the CEO of the Irish Dental Association, said that before going abroad, people should consult with their local dentist.

"We do think that there are the highest standards of dental care here in Ireland, but

what we would say to members of the public is to make an appointment with their local dentist to find out precisely what they need as opposed to what they may think they need," he said.

"Secondly the dental council has a website, dentalcouncil.ie, that has a very good document on choosing your dentist, whether it's here in Ireland or abroad."

According to Mr Hourihan, the Irish Dental Association has not been made aware of any increase in the numbers of people travelling for dental work and is concerned by some of the dental treatment people receive abroad.

"We are not aware of an increased interest in dental care abroad, though it is possible this notion is being promoted by commercial

interests who are seeking to generate business. Dental

tourism, like medical tourism generally, is a fact of life in every developed country, and some people travel to Ireland for specialist dental work.

"The Irish Dental Association is concerned about the results many Irish persons have experienced where they have chosen to travel for dental care in other countries and urges people to discuss their oral health with a dentist at home first before making any decisions on their dental care.

"We need to encourage people who may be travelling abroad to focus on the quality of work they receive and whether that work is really necessary, not just the price of that work."

He wants to encourage people considering travelling

abroad to look at the Dental Council's guidance booklet on choosing the right dentist.

"We would encourage those considering travel to review the very helpful guidance produced by the Dental Council, the regulatory body charged with protecting patients in receipt of dental care," he said.

"More than three out of four Irish dentists had treated patients for problems arising from treatment they received abroad, according to a survey we conducted in 2009.

"Of 440 dentists questioned, 76pc said that over the past 12 months they had seen patients who underwent cheaper procedures overseas. Problems included too much dental work being done over too short a timeframe, unnecessary work and poor materials being used by dentists abroad."



‘I saved €17,500 going abroad for dental work, instead of remortgaging my home and paying up to €35,000 here’

Aoife Breslin

ED FINN faced the prospect of having to fork out up to €35,000 and remortgage his home in order to get costly dental work done.

Instead, he looked at his options abroad and managed to save more than €17,000 by having his teeth fixed at a dental surgery in Budapest, Hungary.

Due to issues with cracked veneers after getting dental work done in South Africa a few years previously, Mr Finn desperately wanted to fix his teeth but was quoted prices ranging from €28,000 to €35,000 by Irish clinics.

It would have meant remortgaging his home in order to afford the expense.

Then a colleague of Mr Finn's returned from Budapest, where he had "high-quality" dental work done, and the travel journalist decided his only option was to look abroad for dental treatment.

"I got lots of prices, as I was going to try get a full set of crowns done if I could. So, for the job I was looking for – I think it was 23 crowns – I got quotes from €28k to €35k in Ireland," he said.

"It was just crazy, completely unaffordable.

"I got prices in Dublin and in Belfast. They were slightly less in Belfast, around €5,000 less.

"I was chatting to someone at work who had got their teeth done in Budapest. He had them done three

years ago and never had any problems, so I went over and had my consultation.

"It wasn't just the cost that appealed to me, but also the person that recommended

the clinic compared it to the *Star Wars* of clinics.

"He said they were on another level in terms of dentistry in Budapest."

Mr Finn originally had concerns about travelling overseas to get dental work, but after speaking to the clinic's Irish representative he felt more at ease.

"I got a quotation and I just decided that this was very affordable, they were extremely professional, and I had word of mouth about the quality, so I went ahead with my treatment in Budapest," he said.

"After my consultation, they found that I had other issues too. I had got root canal treatment in Ireland that cost me quite a lot of money, but it wasn't done properly, so in Budapest they fixed everything for me."

Overall, Mr Finn paid €10,500 for his dental treatment, saving €17,500, after being quoted €28,000 to €35,000 in Ireland for the same procedure.

Seven years after getting the crowns done, Mr Finn said he has never had any issues with the dental work and has even travelled over to Budapest since to get more dental treatment.

"Just before Covid, one of my teeth cracked that I hadn't had crowned during my

procedure," he said. "I got a price in Ireland to fix it, which was €2,500, so I went back to Budapest and got it done for €1,200."

Mr Finn believes having an aftercare dentist based here in Ireland can put patients that are travelling abroad at ease.

"They have dentists here in Ireland too, and for me that

was very important that if anything went wrong I had back-up here and that I didn't have to fly to Budapest every time something happened, which was something I was originally worried about," he said.

Mr Finn's top tips when travelling abroad are to research the clinic, look at reviews and make sure they offer maintenance after your procedure.

"My advice would be to definitely do your research. And what was impressive for me was that the back-up service was really good in terms of when I arrived at the airport there was someone waiting for me, they arranged the hotel, it was just hands-on," he said.

"I would just say make sure to do your research and check reviews. I was lucky, I had word of mouth – which to me was very important. And give yourself time.


"I would get my teeth cleaned every five to six months.

"Maintenance is very important, so once you do that and look after them, you'll have them for life."



Savings:

Ed Finn
travelled to
Budapest
in Hungary
to undergo
treatment

Publication:	kclr96fm.com	Media Cost (€):	5	
Date:	Thursday, July 7, 2022	Reach	986	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	209	

Dental costs survey finds disparity in prices in dental surgeries locally


A survey of dental costs has uncovered significant variations between counties and even surgeries in the same area.

The research from the Irish Independent found that some people are paying nearly 5 times more than others for routine procedures, such as fillings, with huge disparity at a local level.

In one example, one dentist in Kilkenny was found to be charging double the amount for a filling than a surgery 300 metres down the road.


Caroline Robbins is a dentist at Kiwi Dental in Carlow, and is the President of the [Irish Dental Association](#). She told KCLR News that when people are shopping around for dental care, they tend to focus on relationships rather than price.

“The thing with dental care or medical care, I always think you have a relationship with your dentist, you have a relationship with your doctor, you have a relationship with your hairdresser, these are three things that people have very, you know they go find somebody that they like, they go find someone that they trust and like medicine and dentistry we are doing very specialised stuff, so it's not so much about price it's about the relationship”

Publication:	Galway Bay FM	Media Cost (€):	114	
Date:	Thursday, July 7, 2022	Reach	139,000	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	10	


Galway Bay FM @ 07-Jul-2022 17:14 - (Irish)

Dependent shows in Galway city. The cheapest price was 60 euro while the most expensive was 100 EUR. Meanwhile in the county, the price range from 65 euro at the lowest end 205 at the highest nationally. Donegal recorded the lowest for your 35 EUR while a filling with cost patients 170 euro as a surgery and Blackrock in Dublin, Fintan Hourihan, chief executive of the **Irish** dental Association says the costs involved can have a big impact. I think it reflects the fact that it's more expensive to provide dental care in different parts of the country. So primarily the cost enter sink or relates to property-related costs and employment or Labour costs so we all know it's more expensive to live and work in Dublin. And that's why the fees in Dublin are higher than elsewhere. So there's a fairly simple explanation for Galway. Campaigners are spearheading a drive to have rat poison taken off the supermarket shelves. The barren AI project. Established in 20, 19s as the use of Road enter side has a devastating impact on the Barn owl population Den Dory. As a member of the team have been involved in helping barn owls make a comeback and East Galway, he says. They're not looking for an outright ban but more controls on who can purchase and where today. It's kind of a sad story, when you can walk into a Pence's fill up the tab. It is buy a packet of crisps and buy a packet of a dignified it's I suppose we need. We need to have more control over and that's kind of what we're looking for, you know that you can't just walk into a shop and buy will you know if we were to commit after you know, you go through proper tennis to buy certain products and we are asking for the same thing, county planners have given the green light for a tour row stone visitor centre near Loch Ray the proposed centre will see the world-famous stone in cased in a special glass cylinder in a landscaped garden. It will be located on the site adjacent to tour open farm and leisure Park but EUR stone is one of only 3 such artefacts in Ireland and is estimated to be up to two and a half 1000 years old Galway East TD Ciaran Cannon says he is delighted the stone will be returning to its rightful home work all handing a petition of over 7000 signatures to the then Minister John comedy many years ago, arguing a tractor at points. The stone has been in storage for many years. It's fully restored now and we're putting done by the OPCW and European double you have no collaboration with the corporate family who have been guardians of that stone for it for generations to create a new home in tour location their actual paper and this, the fact that Galway County Council has now granted planning permission as a key moment and getting the stone back to to of back to belong in the scoring the up W have the funds in place now to begin developing if you home. It would be environmentally suitable and very much protective of the stones. The very unique 2000 year-old artefact. It is very precious to all of us live in that part of these Cory and having the planning permission in place now and the funds in place to make it happen, as I say, it's a very important milestone and something should be celebrated. And then, finally, I suppose, for people who may not be that familiar with the tourist owner what it is. I suppose it's unique and that its it several 1000 years old but there's a lot of I suppose mystery about what exactly it is and what was used for Yes archaeologist. Over the last 50 years have proposed a number of different theory that what exactly the function of the two rows don't was its there's a general consensus that it was celebratory in some nature than a celebration. The location and that it may have been used for taken worst it what we do know is that it comes from the Celtic 10 period. Mostly, two and a half 1000 years ago and features that very beautiful. The tense for work that we see on so many Celtic are patched back come from that period It's really beautiful piece I dad brought me to see it when I was about 8 or 9 years old that still recalled that moment and laying my hand of the stone speaking that some craftsman 2000 years in the past at created this beautiful thing. I brought my own son to play it one but he was a similar age, so it's very much. It has been very much part of growing up in that part of his Galway paying a visit to the to a stone, be able to do so now. Early in the 21st century in a really fantastic building repository that's going to be developed by the European W to be very exciting for again those many generations to come, deputy caring and they are speaking to our reporter David Nevin still to come on f II Galway the business news and the sports news and we are back with a traffic update we're bringing all your favourite festival stars to your back garden, Galway Bay FM's back garden festival is now streaming exclusively online place in now on our app or go to Galway Bay FM die. The back garden

Publication:	Highland Radio	Media Cost (€):	126	
Date:	Thursday, July 7, 2022	Reach	84,000	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	10	

Highland Radio @ 07-Jul-2022 17:09 - (Irish)

external review of the acquisition of 5 houses at and Crown listed in Buncrana by the Authority. It is understood that the review, which was circulated to council staff and members yesterday found the Council acted properly and there was no impropriety in the transaction. The purchase of the houses has come under scrutiny because some of them were subsequently found tough mega Boris Johnson has resigned as leader of the British conservative party he set to remain on as the prime minister until a replacement is elected. However, he decided to quit after almost 60 of his MPs resigned over the last two days. Speaking today outside 10 Downing Street, he said. No one in politics is indispensable. As we've seen a Westminster of the herd instinct is powerful when the herd moves it moves and my friends in politics, no one is remotely indispensable and our brilliant and Darwinian system will produce another leader equally committed to taking this country forward through tough times. The Taoiseach has said Boris Johnson's exit as prime minister will be a chance to reset Anglo-Irish relations. Micheal Martin said he strongly disagreed with Johnson and political level and that relations are now at a low point. The Taoiseach says important the two governments have close relations to develop stability in the North because ultimately, it's that Cork aren't TalkTalk rule that we both have the boat governments had that is key to the future development of the Good Friday Agreement in all its inordinate aspects and I think there's an opportunity to reset that with any prime minister Tom stage coming to the same Marine Minister Charlie McConalogue has been urged to act urgently. On foot of a joint statement from Ireland's fishing and fish producer organisations. Several groups have come together to sign the document urging Government provide urgent financial support to their industry. Tell them cope of the crisis of raising fuel prices and other costs. It follows a meeting yesterday between Minister McConalogue and the various groups. Sinn Féin's Marine spokesperson on Donegal deputy Potter McLoughlin said the Minister. Simply doesn't understand the significance of the current crisis. Every single national organisation representing professional manner fish producers coming together that's the scale of the crisis. They literally saying that we cannot go to sea. We cannot catch fish. They've been raised in this for 4 months. Last night the level they need to make a profit is less than 60 cents, you know, a leader and their pens one . 30 Plus. He doesn't understand the significance of every single national fishing organisation with that statement. Unprecedented, such as the scale of this crisis the answered enhancing longer there is money in the European Commission has been released. I think there's no lump of money there. Recent days they can different that and help our fishermen as has happened in other European countries and a survey of dental costs has uncovered significant variations between counties and Even surgeries in the same area. Dublin had the highest price for a filling costing patients 170 euro at a surgery and Blackrock. That's compared to 35 EUR. A surgery in County Donegal. The research from the Irish Independent also found some dentists were charging double their competitors prices in some areas. Fintan Hurley and the chief executive with the Irish dental Association says the costs involved can have a big impact. I think it reflects the fact that is more expensive to provide dental care in different parts of the country. So primarily the cost centre sink or relates to property-related costs and employment or Labour costs so we all know it's more expensive to live and work in Dublin. And that's why the fees in Dublin are higher than elsewhere. So there's a fairly simple explanation for the times 12 in his past 5 o'clock, building a short break sport with Kenny's coming up after these choose your local Centra for great offers this week like Centra fresh Irish Striploin Steak 3 60 gram now 7 EUR Coca Cola 3 30 Mill for can pack now two EUR 90 and until Sunday Oyster Bay Sauvignon Blanc, now 9 EUR celebrate summer choose Centra Centra lived every day enjoy go sensibly farmers at targets beef opened a told they could treble their income. Find out how inside this weeks Irish farmers Journal also McConnell Óg squares up to Ryan has battled for tech sector from cattle herd cuts intensifies with top tips for boosting fodder reserves and saving and fertiliser. Fears of a Russian prices for next winter ease and we report in the first of the autumn wheeling sales but don't miss your free guide to next week's FA machinery show inside the suite, Irish farmers Journal. You cannot afford to miss it. This weekend the northwest Donegal vintage Club will host their village show at their new location of killed on Valley with classic and vintage cars, tractors, other vehicles and Irish cultural influence craft and artisan displays all welcome. There's also a funfair, teacher and and traders

Publication:	kfmradio.com	Media Cost (€):	9	
Date:	Thursday, July 7, 2022	Reach	2,992	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	101	

Kildare Focus

Seán Moynihan Chief Executive, ALONE • ESRI report on homeownership & retirement • ALONE says more than 1 in 4 social housing applicants are aged 50+

Cormac Cahill

Head of Advocacy, Research, & Public Affairs, Alzheimer Society of Ireland

- Calling on Government to invest €19 million in urgent infrastructure and community supports for people affected by dementia


EuroStat

- New data shows how long the average Irish teenager will work for in their lifetime

Fintan Hourihan

Chief Executive, [Irish Dental Association](#)

- Routine dental treatments are costing almost five times more in some parts of the country compared to other areas

Publication:	newstalk.com	Media Cost (€):	836	
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State should be helping with cost of dental care, IDA says

Big variations have been found in the price of routine treatments across the country
The Government should be helping with the cost of dental care as part of the cost of living crisis.

That's according to Fintan Hourihane, chief executive with the [Irish Dental Association](#).

He was reacting to big variations being found in the price of routine treatments across the country.

Advertisement

It shows some patients are paying nearly five-times more than others for routine procedures, such as fillings.

Some 220 dentists across the country were examined in different electoral areas - with Dublin being the most expensive and Donegal the cheapest.

But large variations were also found within the same country.

In one Kilkenny practice, a filling cost €60 - but in another practice 300 metres away, the same procedure was €120.

Mr Hourihane told The Pat Kenny Show the State needs to do more to help people.

"There is difficulty for many people accessing dental care - while there are options and great variety in fees charged... the State is offering no assistance in terms of affordability.

"We're in a cost of living crisis - the State doesn't offer any assistance towards the cost of dental care.

"It offers huge amounts towards medical GPs, it offers zero to dentists and that's reflected in the costs incurred by patients.

"We're saying that in the next budget that there needs to be a look at things like tax relief on dental care, and other ways of alleviating the costs".

On the price variations, he says it is down to several factors.

"I think it reflects the fact that it's more expensive to provide dental care in different parts of the country.

"So primarily the costs dentists incur related to property-related costs and employment or labour costs.

"We all know it's more expensive to live and work in Dublin, and that's why the fees in Dublin are higher than elsewhere".

And he says the actual procedure will also change the price.

"With regard to fillings, there are different materials.

"People would be aware of what they refer to as the white filling or the silver filling.

"Different materials will be used for fillings and that's usually the explanation where fillings are concerned.

"People need to ask around and not just simply assume".



Postcode lottery in dental costs, with some patients paying out five times more

∴ Dublin clinic charges €170 for filling, while in Donegal it's €35

Ciara O'Loughlin, Eoghan Moloney, Aoife Breslin and Paul Hyland

MASSIVE variations in the price of routine dental treatments across the country have been uncovered in an *Irish Independent* survey.

It shows some patients are paying nearly five times more than others for routine procedures such as fillings.

We looked at the prices charged by 220 dentists and found they differ hugely, even among surgeries in the same county.

Dublin was the most expensive and Donegal the cheapest.

In one Kilkenny dentist's surgery, it costs €60 for a filling, while only 300 metres away in another, patients are charged €120.

In North Dublin, the price of a filling in a Sutton clinic starts at €60, while a short drive away a Malahide dentist is charging €150.

In Blackrock, South Dublin, Seapoint Clinic charges patients €170 for a filling, while a clinic in nearby Dundrum offers the procedure from €70.

Of the 220 dentists surveyed, Seapoint was the most expensive for a filling at nearly five times the price of the cheapest, which is in Donegal and charges €35.

A spokesperson for Seapoint said the reason it charges

more than others is that it takes "a holistic view of dental care as an essential part of overall health rather than trying to be a low-cost provider".

"Seapoint Clinic is a private-only, high-tech specialist centre and our pricing reflects the quality of the dentistry that we provide.

"Not all 'fillings' are the same. We carry out full cosmetic reconstructions of teeth rather than just 'filling' them in the traditional sense."

The cost of a routine check-up in Ireland ranges from €30 to €120.

A dentist in Cork city is the most expensive at €120 for a check-up, and promises patients "a private clinic that focuses on providing the highest level of care and a unique customer service experience".

Of all the dentists surveyed, more than 30 offer a check-up for €30. The national average charge is €45.20.

The price of a scale and polish ranges from €20 to €120, with the national average being €70.61.

Western counties including Clare, Mayo and Donegal tended to be cheaper than Kildare, Meath and Wicklow.

Counties with fewer clinics, such as Sligo and Roscommon, tended to be dearer than other rural areas with more dentists, such as Cavan and

Monaghan.

Fintan Hourihan, CEO of the Irish Dental Association, said price is usually "a long way down the list" of why patients choose a dental practice.

"We don't believe people make decisions, in terms of a long-term relationship with a dentist, based on fees, but more so on the quality of care that is provided to them," he said.

"The last survey we did, we found that an individual spent an average of 11 years with the same dentist.

"While people are entitled to shop around, and this is facilitated by dentists publishing their fees, we found that when people find the right dentist they tend to stay with them.

"When questions are asked – 'Why did you choose a particular dentist?' – they usually base it on different criteria, but usually the price is a long way down their list.

"That's not saying people aren't mindful of fees, but it's

about midway down the list of criteria when choosing a dentist."

Mr Hourihan said dentists are transparent with their fees, but until a patient sits in their chair they do not know exactly what work will need to be done.

He added that costs will vary

from county to county as the cost of labour, property and utility bills are “far greater” in cities than in rural Ireland.

A survey conducted by researchers at Trinity College Dublin also found notable price variations by region and type of services, as well as an uneven supply of dentists across the country.

The study, led by a team from the Centre for Health Policy and Management, surveyed 100 dentists around the country in 2020 and found the cost of teeth whitening ranges from €150 to €450.

The biggest variations in real terms were found in the cost of more complex treatments such as root canal work, with the price ranging between €400 and €975.

One of the Trinity report's authors, Samantha Smith, said the study showed the average price for most services, apart from small fillings and periodontal care, was cheaper in rural-based dental practices than in their urban counterparts.

“Lower overheads in rural areas compared with urban

areas may be contributing to these patterns,” Dr Smith said.

Similarly, average prices for dentists based in counties along the Border are also cheaper for most services than in other parts of Ireland.

“These patterns suggest that dental practices may be in competition with practices in nearby areas across the Border in Northern Ireland,” Dr Smith said.

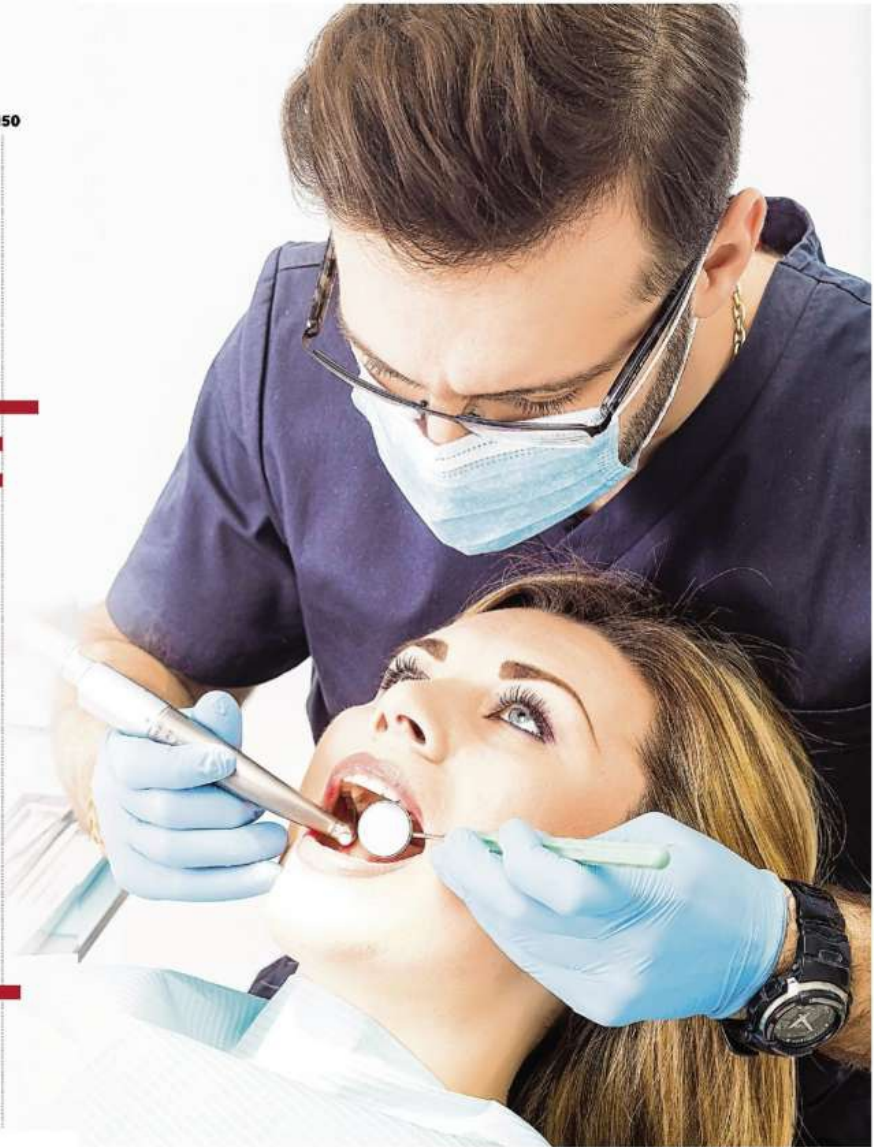
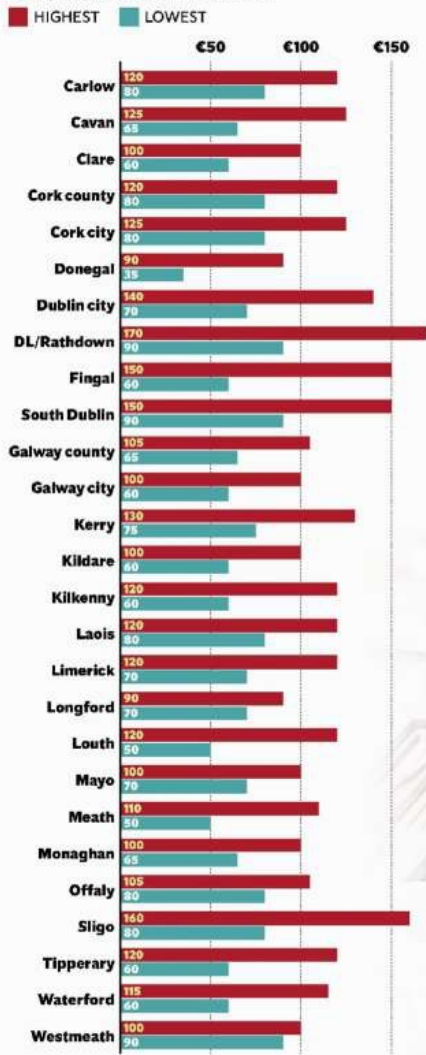
Although the Dental Council of Ireland specifies a list of services for which prices must be displayed in a dental surgery, the report said it was “interesting” that the same level of information was not available in online price lists.


Prices were missing for up to 51pc of some treatments, while the cost of procedures for children and students was also very limited.

Biggest variations in price were for more complex treatments such as root canal work

HIGHEST AND LOWEST PRICES FOR A FILLING IN YOUR AREA

Based on a survey of 220 dentists nationwide



Publication:	independent.ie	Media Cost (€):	21241	
Date:	Thursday, July 7, 2022	Reach	809,200	
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The counties where dental patients pay five times more for a filling

Massive variations in the price of routine dental treatments across the country have been uncovered in an Irish Independent survey.

It shows some patients are paying nearly five times more than others for routine procedures such as fillings.

We looked at the prices charged by 220 dentists and found they differ hugely, even among surgeries in the same county.

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Prices were missing for up to 51pc of some treatments, while the cost of procedures for children and students was also very limited.

Caption:

Stock image

Publication:	South East Radio FM	Media Cost (€):	49	
Date:	Wednesday, July 6, 2022	Reach	69,000	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	10	

South East Radio FM @ 06-Jul-2022 17:30 - (Irish)

cladding and Bath where everything and store has been slashed in price. The Right Price Tiles&Wood flooring, 50 % of mega summer Sile stores nationwide, so they'll know of at least 20 EUR text and powered by doors go Ridge caught out what's up your text for for seven, three, seven, three, seven, nine, five, six, send us a voice message with your doors garage caught out also have a specialist commercial test set out for fans jeeps and camper Wednesday said the July 5 30 on southeast time to catch up with the latest headlines now Killian Murphy has those first Killian thanks. Well good evening from the newsroom, the finance minister says we can expect both targeted and broad measures in the upcoming budget to help people with the cost of living crisis. A number of broad measures were announced yesterday by the Education Minister to help with the high costs of new school year. More Or more people who are struggling to rent or buy a house have been moving into mobile homes, according to a Wexford dealership footballers from wallets mobile homes and you are says he has recorded an increase of 60 % in the residential sales since the pandemic. The president of the [Irish](#) dental Association believes the medical card scheme failed patients on so many levels. Doctor Carolyn Roberts was responding to the news that an 80 year-old man in County Wexford at pull his own teeth due to a failure of access to dental services and the weather staying dry for the rest of the day with some sunny breaks. Tonight will be humid and mostly cloudy, but it will be dry apart from the odd spot of drizzle, but mild temperatures staying above 13 14 degrees. Thank you very much. The poor man and pulleys and TV and I was sure I shouldn't really love to know you've got a very serious face but reminding those old cowboy movies will go, I'll come and town it I rope around your tooth and smashed the worst. Ok, it's quite used to stay quite there earlier on. We were telling you about reports of bird flu in the UK. Hundreds of dead birds are being found. And if you find a dead birds in your area, report them and a very nice Lyster said the best place to report them as BirdWatch Ireland so BirdWatch Ireland .ie have that's the email address and they'll tell you what you to do the pie Alan forecast. Brought to you by local pharmacy .ie how Leslie Ross Kelly's Enniscorthy O'Donnell and Mayor's Walk Waterford delivering your prescription to your door. Prof Ray seek local pharmacy .ie judge sorry about that kill it is the book. It just kept going there. What is the problem forecast home forecast is high for Thursday and Friday is such a professional, thank you very much that resilience is recruiting support workers for a residential house in Enniscorthy, log onto resilience .ie or you can email your CV to careers at resilience start ie den full shop feeding is recruiting qualified carpenter or an experienced would machinist for its workshops, Karen Walsh Enniscorthy email CV to Dem full shop fit a gmail .com Oh 5.9 2.6 one double 3 is their phone number Adams town newborn Clonroche cameras Cushenstown Raheem community employment scheme is seeking a CE supervisor email your CV to a.m. CCC are area development and gmail .com S&N granite can mould and is recruiting for time sales and logistics team members responsible for sales and organising deliveries and it's also hiring a full-time office administrator for general office duties and accounts. Email your CV to info at Essen granite .ie fty s Enniscorthy is hiring a community youth worker and a Roma youth and community worker to apply email Kieran Donoghue for applications fty s Wexford gmail .com finally Doyle's garage Cortown as vacancies for an apprentice motor Technician, an apprentice Body Shop technician, push your CV please to Doyle's garage coast world Cortown we can email info a doors garage .com and full details of all of these jobs is on our website right now which is south-east new .ie



**NATIONWIDE PROBLEM
HITS HARD IN KERRY**

Just ONE dentist taking on new Medical Card patients

■ **Councillor's shock at shortage in vital service countywide**

■ **19 practitioners close books to HSE scheme**

ONLY ONE dentist in the whole of County Kerry is still taking on new medical card patients, the HSE has confirmed in a damning admission of its failure to provide dental services in the county.

BY MAJELLA O'SULLIVAN

Of the 69 dentists listed on the Department of Social Protection's website for Kerry, only 20 are still treating medical card holders in an exodus by dentists from the HSE scheme under which dentists are contracted to provide care.

Out of the 20 practitioners still participating in the scheme, 19 have closed their books to new patients.

The 'shocking' revelations came to light at a meeting of the Regional Health Forum in Cork on Thursday, in response to a notice

of motion by Tralee county councillor Mikey Sheehy, who sits on the forum and was elected its new chairman on Thursday.

In a written response, Michael Fitzgerald, the chief officer for Cork Kerry Community Health-care, said the Primary Care Den-

tal Service provided 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.

He said children under 16 years of age were treated in HSE dental

clinics and adults by private dental practitioners contracted to the HSE under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS).

"There are particular issues with the HSE dental service for adults in DTSS. This is a nationwide problem and is not unique to Kerry," Mr Fitzgerald said.

He added: "A number of private general dental practitioners

(GDPs) have resigned from the scheme and many of the general dental practitioners still operating the scheme have restricted access

and are only seeing existing patients.

"At this time, there are 20 dental practices operating the DTSS in Kerry with just one accepting new patients," Mr Fitzgerald said, adding that his understanding was that the matter was currently being considered at national level by the Department of Health and the HSE.

Councillor Sheehy admitted he was 'shocked' by the scale of the shortage.

He told *Kerry's Eye*: "The response from the HSE is fairly damning in itself that throughout Kerry there are only 20 dentists treating medical card patients but, as of now, only one dentist in the entire county taking on new patients.

"This is a double-edged sword because you have dentists who are not being reimbursed appropriately by the Department of



Health for their services or the equipment they have to use, and the other side is you have patients caught in the crossfire who can't access care," he said.

There was a review of fees paid to dentists under the scheme in April, the first review since 2008, but no change to terms governing the scheme.

"To be honest, I was shocked when I saw the response from the HSE. I knew it was going to be bad but that there is now only one dentist taking on medical card holders in the entire county is absolutely shocking," Councillor Sheehy said.

The Fianna Fáil councillor said there was also no provision of either dental or orthodontic services for children in Kerry.

"This is purely an issue of resources. You have a very professional cohort of medical practitioners who simply are not being reimbursed for the services they're offering and as a consequence patients are being caught in the crossfire," he said.



Councillor Mikey Sheehy



Medical card holders 'still struggling to access dentists'

Sinn Féin TD Claire Kerrane has said that medical card holders continue to struggle to access dentists for essential healthcare despite recent assurances from the Minister for Health.

"For a long time now, medical card patients have found it more and more difficult to access dental care under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS), which provides certain dental services to medical card holders," she said.

"Dentists were leaving the DTSS across the State in their droves, and rather than immediately step in when this became apparent, the Minister waited over a year to intervene.

"At the end of April, I was advised by the Minister for Health that discussions had been held between his Department and the Irish Dental Association,

with the most recent on March 2nd, where the HSE presented proposals to invest additional resources into the Dental Treatment Services Scheme.

"The Minister gave approval for 'significant fee increases', as he called them, to be paid to contracted dentists across a number of items, including dental examination and fillings. Minister Donnelly also advised he has approved the reintroduction of Scale and Polish for medical card patients on the Scheme.

"The Minister assured me that such changes would be implemented as quickly as possible, yet I am still getting reports of people unable to access a dentist in Roscommon and Galway. I have followed up with the Minister on this. Medical card holders must be able to access dental care".



HEALTH

Trying to get a dentist in Limerick is a pain

by Bernie English
 bernie@limerickpost.ie

LIMERICK dental patients are particularly feeling the pain of not being able to get a dentist appointment.

That's according to leaders of the Irish Dental Association, who are calling for radical reform of the industry and particularly of the medical card scheme.

A shortage of people signing up to study as dentists has put huge pressure on existing practices, with an estimated 500 new dentists needed every year and just 200 registering with the Dental Council.


Said CEO of the Irish Dental Association Fintan Houlihan: "Talking to our people in Limerick, it is one of the worst affected areas. We see this in calls from medical card patients who say they are

experiencing huge difficulty, and this extends into Clare and Tipperary."

The Irish Dental Association has called on the Government to reform the medical card (DTSS) scheme and replace it with a fit-for-purpose scheme that reflects modern dental practices and standards.

Newly-elected President of the Association, Dr Caroline Robins said: "We need the Government to intervene in the recruitment and retention of public dentists and to invest in the training of dental students immediately before we reach a crisis in dentistry.

"The pressure from dental patients will not and cannot be relieved until proper investment is made. Dental practices are unable to deal with the volume of patients that are arriving to their clinics, and recruitment of associate dentists, dental hygienists and dental nurses is at an all-time low."

Publication:	roscommonherald.ie	Media Cost (€):	4	
Date:	Wednesday, June 15, 2022	Reach	500	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	341	

Medical card holders finding it ‘nearly impossible to get a dentist’ | Roscommon Herald

Medical card holders are finding it “nearly impossible to get a dentist”, the HSE West Regional Health Forum was told last week.

Cllr Tony Ward made the comments during a question on the number of local dentists participating in the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS). He said that councillors throughout the western region had been contacted by medical card holders.

“I have people ringing me up, especially in relation to children, saying ‘I can have treatment but it will be private for €3,000 or €5,000’ and those people would not have that type of money,” he said.

He said that medical card holders would be willing to travel to other counties if a dentist would see them.

The HSE provided Cllr Ward with a list of seven local dentists that provide a service to people under the medical card scheme.

However, the dentists' organisation, the [Irish Dental Association](#), has repeatedly questioned the accuracy of the HSE's data on participating dentists.

“It has been long established however that the lists operated by the HSE have been vastly overstated nationally for many years,” the association's chief executive Fintan Hourihan told the Herald. “This has been shown by parliamentary questions which show the number of dentists who have received minimal levels of income from treating eligible patients and which suggest that less than 700 dentists nationally are actively participating in the scheme while the HSE lists suggest that over 1,100 dentists hold contracts.”

He added that many contracts ‘exist’ for dentists who have moved location or retired but HSE records suggest they still remain available to provide care.

“The increasing difficulty experienced by medical card patients in accessing dentists and the attendant political outcry and media coverage is further evidence of the fact that there has been a massive exodus of dentists from the scheme in recent years,” he said.


Mr Hourihan said that the Association had long sought the modernisation of the scheme.

Publication:	clare.fm	Media Cost (€):	5	
Date:	Monday, June 13, 2022	Reach	2,618	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	89	

5 Dentists In Clare Drop Out Of Medical Card Scheme This Year

Five dentists in Clare have stopped offering care to medical card holders since the beginning of the year. 19 dentists were employed under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme in January, then the HSE's monthly contractor reports showed this figure dropped to 17 in June.

However, new figures from Mid West Community Healthcare that number has fallen by a further three to 14 – making that a drop of five in the space of six months.

Publication:	thejournal.ie	Media Cost (€):	11092	
Date:	Sunday, June 12, 2022	Reach	330,140	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	1,112	

Exodus of dentists from medical card scheme leaving vulnerable households without dental care

Figures from the start of this year showed just 660 dentists were actively treating medical card patients.
3 minutes ago

Views

Comments

DENTISTS ARE CONTINUING to drop out of the State's medical card scheme, leaving older people and those in low-income households without access to basic [Oral Healthcare](#).

Speaking to The Journal , Fintan Hourihan, CEO of the [Irish Dental Association](#), said in the last number of years there has been “an exodus of significant proportions” from the scheme due to the low level of fees paid by the State and frustrations with how the scheme is operated.

According to the HSE, the number of dentists holding Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS) contracts is now 1,082. However figures from the start of this year show just 660 dentists across the country were actively treating medical card patients.

The number of dentists holding DTSS contracts has fallen from 1,660 in 2017.

“What that means is that the eligible number of patients has remained the same but the number of dentists available to provide the care has halved,” Hourihan said.

“The consequence of that is that it's more difficult for people to get an appointment to see a dentist.

When patients are told their dentist is no longer on the scheme they should be advised to contact the HSE to direct them to someone else local in the scheme but if you take even a medium sized town there might previously have been six dentists in the scheme in the locality and now there are only two or three and they're facing having to potentially double the number of medical card patients they see.

“They can't possibly manage that so there are waiting lists, people have to travel further and we know that many people only call to make an appointment when there is a problem and they are already in pain.”

The HSE said there have been reports of “deficits in DTSS contractor capacity” in many parts of the country, and within each region there are areas that have been more impacted than others.

It said it is aware that some medical card holders have experienced difficulties in accessing dental treatment under the scheme and when it is informed the matter is followed up by local community services who seek to assist medical card holders.

‘You can't blame the dentists’

Pensioner Tom Fennelly recently received a letter from his dentist informing him that the surgery would no longer be participating in the scheme going forward.

He said does not believe any other local dentists where he lives in County Dublin are on the scheme and while he is not in immediate need of dental work, he has in recent years relied on his medical card for dental services.

“Two years ago I went with my card, I needed three fillings but I was only entitled to two under the scheme,” he said. “I got two, one of them fell out a few weeks later and the dentist couldn't replace it under the scheme because I was only entitled to two.”

He said he had to wait a year to get the filling replaced.

“There's not one dentist around here that will take the medical card and you can't blame the dentists, they're not being paid enough,” he said. “It's not their fault, it's the system.”

Fintan Hourihan said dentists have, for years, raised issues about the way in which the scheme operated, both in terms of the fees and the type or amount of dental work covered.

“Up until recently the HSE would have said you can't offer white fillings in posterior teeth, you could only offer the silver ones, you're limited to two fillings per year even if the person needs more and they only pay for the use of certain technologies,” he explained.

Dentists have always seen this as an interference in their treatment of patients. Usually you examine a patient, you set out a treatment plan and proceed on that basis, but if you can only do half of what you think they need that's

not satisfactory for the dentist or the patient.

He said the fees paid by the State for services under the scheme are not covering the full costs for dentists and many no longer see it as operationally viable. Additional costs incurred during the Covid-19 pandemic without adequate government support have also added to frustrations, he said.

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To address the crisis, the government recently approved new measures to provide for expanded dental health care for medical card holders and increased fees for dental contractors under the scheme, in the hope that more dentists will see more medical card patients. The expansion of services included the reintroduction of a scale and polish for all medical card holders one a year.

The combination of these measures represents an additional investment of €26 million in the scheme this year compared to 2021.

In a statement to The Journal , the Department of Health acknowledged that “a significant number of contracted dentists chose to opt out of the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS), citing various reasons, including the range of treatments available, and the viability of fees payable under the scheme”.

“To address those concerns, the Minister has given a commitment to substantial reform of oral health provision in accordance with the National Oral Health Policy, Smile agus Sláinte, which was published in 2019,” it said.

“Improving and enabling easy access for the public to [Oral Healthcare](#) services is a key component of that policy.

Under the policy, it is proposed that [Oral Healthcare](#) packages will be provided for medical card holders over 16 years. The packages will be provided in a local primary care setting by [Oral Healthcare](#) practitioners contracted by the HSE. HSE community [Oral Healthcare](#) services will provide additional high-support care as required.

The recent expansion of the scheme and increased fees were designed to address the immediate problem experienced by medical card holders who are trying to access the service.

The changes to the scheme came into effect from the beginning of May and the department said they are designed to secure services for medical card holders pending a more substantive reform of dental services.

Significant changes to the provision of services for children are also planned under the proposed reform, the department said.

Short URL

Publication:	live95fm.ie	Media Cost (€):	12	
Date:	Sunday, June 12, 2022	Reach	4,080	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	108	

Limerick patients hit by dental staff shortages

Limerick is currently one of the hardest places in Ireland to get a dentist appointment.

The [Irish Dental Association](#) is calling for radical reform of the industry and significant investment in the country's dental schools due to a chronic shortage of dentists.

It's estimated that 500 new dentists are needed every year yet just 200 are registering with the Dental Council and only a fraction of them are from the dental schools at Trinity and UCC.

CEO of the [Irish Dental Association](#) Fintan Hourihan says Limerick patients are among those that are hardest hit by the shortages:

Publication:	connachttribune.ie	Media Cost (€):	99	
Date:	Saturday, June 11, 2022	Reach	11,900	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	307	

2,000 patients waiting more than three years for dental treatment

There are over 2,000 patients waiting at least three years for orthodontic dental treatment in Galway. Figures released by the HSE at a Regional Health Forum West meeting reveal that 1,402 patients were on the dental treatment waiting list who have been deemed eligible for treatment. The waiting time for treatment is currently three-and-a-half years, according to the CEO of the Saolta group Tony Canavan.

A further 757 patients were awaiting assessment. These would all have an appointment by the end of July. The waiting time for the first assessment was currently three months.

In answer to questions tabled by Councillor Daithí Ó Cualáin, Breda Crehan-Roche, Chief Officer of Community Healthcare West revealed there was a Hospital Theatre Service for extractions for very young patients, complex patients and nervous patients.

“Currently 143 patients are waiting for this service, some for over two years. Theatre access was significantly reduced due to Covid- 19,” she stated.

Cllr Ó Cualáin (FF) said he had family members waiting for **Dental Surgery** at University Hospital Galway.


“The fact that there's 143 nervous, young or complex cases waiting two years, that's very concerning because of the pain involved...the figures are astounding.”

He said the HSE should look into the potential for some patients to be sent abroad or to Northern Ireland for treatment under the National Treatment Purchase Fund.

The HSE also revealed there were 25 private dental practices in Galway and Connemara currently registered with the HSE to treat medical card holders.

Cllr Ó Cualáin, a nurse based in Connemara, said the small number of dentists accepting medical cards was worrying.

He pointed out that 47 per cent of dentists had recently left the scheme due to the bureaucracy involved.

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Date:	Thursday, June 9, 2022	Reach	2,482	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	288	

Ukrainian dentists could help relieve dental waiting lists

Photo from Pixabay A Thurles dentist says that time constraints and financial concerns have prompted dentists to stop taking on medical card holders as clients.

Almost 70,000 children are waiting to be called to school dentists following the suspension of services during the pandemic.

Aidan Burke told Tipp Today that the reason for many dentists' pulling back from the dental treatment services scheme was due to finances just 'breaking even', which is adding to the issue.

"A lot of dentists have pulled out of the medical card system. Unfortunately, the finances, it just wasn't really making sense to do it. With the medical card, you don't make any money on it. It might just break even for you. I can see why people have pulled out of it. That's not going to work out long term, you know, in any business. "

Meanwhile Aidan Burke believes that an uptake of Ukrainian dentists in Ireland could help relieve dental waiting lists.

Ukrainian dentists trying to register with the Irish dental system may encounter issues or time delays as they are not members of the EU.

Aidan believes there could be a capacity for extra dentists in the next year, which would help with the long waiting lists.

"I've come across a couple of Ukrainian dentists who are trying to register with the Irish dental system. Because they're non-EU, it's quite hard for them to register, and it's taking a bit of time. I'm sure the dental council are doing their best to get them registered, but there could be a capacity for extra dentists in the next year or so."



Evan Gorman on his way to winning the wellie throwing competition at the Killeigh Fun Day and barbecue on the bank holiday Monday last. Photo Ger Rogers.

Crisis in accessing dentists has deepened in Laois/ Offaly claims Carol Nolan

THE crisis in accessing dentists who provide services to medical card holders in Laois Offaly has deepened over the course of the last number of months according to the Independent TD Carol Nolan.

Deputy Nolan was speaking after the Chief Officer of the HSE's Midlands Louth Meath Community Health Organisation, Des O'Flynn, confirmed to her that as of

March 2022 the number of dentists registered to treat patients under the Dental Treatment Service Scheme (DTSS) scheme is 10 in Co Offaly and just 1 in Co Laois.

Mr O'Flynn previously confirmed to Deputy Nolan in October 2021, that there were only forty-eight remaining practices within the Dental Treatment Services Scheme across the entire Midlands region, but that thirteen of

those were operating within counties Laois and Offaly:

"The provision of dental care to medical card holders in this state is in absolute freefall," Deputy Nolan said.

"The situation in Laois is particularly acute however with just one service provider for medical card holders remaining. That is the clearest indication yet that something has gone profoundly and radically

wrong with the entire system."

"What is even more alarming is the fact that the HSE has also confirmed to me that there are no new applications being processed to join the DTSS for the HSE dental midlands area."

"This is an intolerable situation for medical card holders and indeed all those who urgently need to access a dentist for urgent treatment."



Just one Laois dentist is offering services to medical card holders

By Joe Barrett

JUST one dental practice is offering services to medical card holders in Laois. That's according to deputy Carol Nolan, who said just one dentist in Laois is registered to treat patients under the Dental Treatment Service Scheme (DTSS).

Deputy Nolan described the service as being in crisis. She said: "The provision of dental care to medical card holders in this state is in absolute freefall. The situation in Laois is particularly acute with just one service provider for medical card holders remaining. That is the clearest indication yet that something has gone profoundly and radically wrong with the entire system."

"What is even more alarming is the fact that the HSE has also confirmed to me that there are no new applications being processed to join the DTSS for the HSE dental midlands area."

Deputy Nolan said: "This is an intolerable situation for medical card holders and, indeed, all those who urgently need to access a dentist for urgent treatment. What I find absolutely appalling, however, is that there seems to be no



Laois-Offaly TD Carol Nolan claims the system is in freefall

sense of genuine urgency around this issue from government."

"Government must wake up to the full-blown emergency that now exists in this area and act immediately to engage with the likes of the Irish Dental Association and others, to try and create a pathway forward that will bring confidence back to the scheme for dental practitioners."

Last year, the Irish Dental Association (IDA) said that dental treatment in Laois for

medical card holders is in "complete chaos".

It also warned that "the unprecedented number of dentists withdrawing from the 'outdated' DTSS is having serious repercussions for patients".


Dental association chief executive Fintan Hourihan said: "Between 2017 and 2020, state spending on dental care for medical card patients in the Laois/Offaly local health office area decreased by 39%, from €2,314,476.54 to €1,413,827.58.




Deputy Nolan described the dental service as being 'in crisis'. Image for illustration purposes

"Dentists want to be able to provide care for medical card patients, but the government is leaving them with little choice but to minimise their involvement or withdraw."

Because of the drop-off in funding and dentists' participation, he said that medical card patients were now faced with delays while seeking treatment, increased travel times while seeking that treatment and possible reliance on the already under-funded public dental service to provide care in areas where DTSS contracts are not in place.

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Almost 70,000 children miss out on State dental appointments

 < ◇ Nearly 70,000 children and adults with special needs failed to receive a first dental appointment from the Government last year, as the country reeled from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Just under 165,000 such dental appointments were never offered to the HSE's target groups due to the impact of Covid across 2020 and 2021, the Department of Health said – a failure rate of 54%.

Such targeted assessments of young children and vulnerable adults are carried out each year to identify "preventive interventions and the need for restorative care" while monitoring the dental development of the target cohorts.

While a large shortfall had been noted in 2021 as compared to 2019, the department said that improvements had been made in the second half of the year.

It said the HSE's dental services had been hit hard by the pandemic's requirement for the redeployment of health care workers to Covid-specific roles, such as testing, contact tracing and vaccination, together with the implementation of infection control guidance.

In an update for the Public Accounts Committee on the state of the nation's dental services, the Department's secretary-general Robert Watt said the HSE's dental division had seen extensive redeployment predominantly for the purpose of testing and tracing, leading to a 23% reduction in available staff.

He said that, in certain areas, access to dental facilities had also been reduced due to their repurposing for pandemic-related activities, adding that the catastrophic cyber attack suffered by the HSE in May of 2021 had also had a "significant impact" on dental services.

The department said the number of tooth fillings delivered to the population had declined by 40% in 2020 leading to "little or no prevention" of dental maladies, while just 33 of 208 HSE dental facilities were still in use for that purpose at the end of 2020.

Likewise, for the facilities which remained open, Covid-related protocols such as cleaning between patients had reduced the number of patients being seen each day once services resumed.

Access to general anaesthetic dental treatment for patients remains limited at present, the department said, with all patients undergoing such a procedure still requiring Covid tests prior to attendance.

While most HSE oral health staff have now returned to their primary duties, the briefing note said, the capacity of the service remains reduced due to "strict adherence to physical distancing and enhanced infection prevention and control measures", leading to a necessary need to "optimise the resources available".

What's your view on this issue?

You can tell us here

Actions being taken to regain the ground lost to the pandemic in terms of targeted dental care include children, who are yet to receive an initial dental assessment and adults with special care needs, being given the "highest priority", followed by children of sixth class age.

Mr Watt said that the Dental Treatment Services Scheme , which provides free dental care to medical card holders aged 16 and over, had seen the number of contractors actively providing care decrease "substantially" since the beginning of the pandemic.

In response, Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly approved increased fees for contractors in April of this year.

Caption:

The department said the number of tooth fillings delivered to the population had declined by 40% in 2020 leading to "little or no prevention" of dental maladies. File picture



165k dental visits go unoffered over Covid

Cianan Brennan

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In response, Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly approved increased fees for contractors in April of this year.

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Date:	Saturday, May 28, 2022	Reach	8,840	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	81	

Crisis Shortage Of Dentists As Graduates Heading Abroad


Last updated on May 28th, 2022 There's a crisis shortage of dentists as graduates are heading abroad. The [Irish Dental Association](#) says there are fears the shortages will affect children's oral health, with some not able to see a practitioner until they're in secondary school.

Dr Caroline Robins, dentist and owner at Kiwi Dental in Carlow and president of [Irish Dental Association](#) she says the future is concerning

Publication:	Galway Bay FM	Media Cost (€):	63	
Date:	Friday, May 27, 2022	Reach	139,000	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	10	


Galway Bay FM @ 27-May-2022 22:00 - (Irish)

Oxi generation as used for sports injury which is covered by many clubs or schools insurance, subject to conditions. See Oxi generation .com for more Galway Bay FM get access to urgent care within an hour of arrival at the Laya health and well-being clinic Galway rapid treatment for minor injuries and illnesses available to everyone, including kids aged 12 months and older as Galway on your smart speaker and in your hand today is this Bellew, Galway. Galway Bay FM news. Its 10 o'clock that evening on clean O'Dwyer. Authorities in Texas say they made the wrong decision to wait for a team to storm a classroom during a shooting at a primary school. 19 children two teachers were killed when a gunman opened fire in new Valley on Tuesday. It emerged children called 9.1 begging police for help. Stephen McCraw from the State Department of Public Safety, became emotional. Speaking about the assault, be taken of the law and protect people in any time something tragic like that we wouldn't know what happened. If we can do better next Focus Ireland says the Government cannot be allowed to drift into allowing homelessness figures to rise. It's after the numbers in emergency accommodation were back above 10000 for the first time since February 2020. They include nearly 3000 children Focus Ireland spokesperson Conor Colgan said the Government has to step in crossing this dreadful threshold of over 10000, must be a trigger for the Government into an urgent response and we must not rest into a situation where they are saying these well I think these figures continue to rise in the coming months. The British prime minister is facing more calls from MPs within his own party to resign over the Sue Gray report into lockdown gathering Is at Downing Street. Bob Neill, the chair of the Commons Justice Committee is the latest to submit a letter of no-confidence in Boris Johnson, he explains why the PM's loss of support and that of his constituents about us, I'm sorry, we've lost face in the prime minister and because that trust has been undermined. I don't believe. Sadly, the prime minister. He's able to rebuild it, and therefore we need to move on and by the new leader of the Conservative party and Irish fire danger notice for all areas where hazardous fuels such as gorse, heather, dried grasses and other vegetation exist has been issued by the Department of Agriculture. The notice is in effect until next Monday at noon. Landowners and members of the public are urged to be vigilant and report any uncontrolled or unattended fires immediately to the FA service by darling 9.9 or one one to funding is on the way to revitalise rural towns and villages, so they become attractive, vibrant places for people to live and work up to 400000 euro will be available per local Authority each year for the purchase and redevelopment of vacant and derelict properties authorities will work with rural communities to learn what they need the most talk on board member of a campaign to say the a stark Phoenix cinema in Dingle, County Kerry, says is important is repurposed. We are very keen to see this building continue to be a community facility. The fact is it's been in private ownership, for the last 100 years. The last 40 years. It's been in the care of the a Sullivan family who have run a fantastic business with you no bringing great cinema to the town and now we want to make sure it remains within the community. There's a crisis shortage of dentists as graduates are heading abroad. The Irish dental Association says there are fears the shortages will affect children's all health with some not able to see a practitioner until their in secondary school Doctor Caroline Robbins dentist donor at key dental in Carlow and president of the Irish dental Association says the future is concerning. Will everyone working from home, I found that I had no patients are available to come in, like, I thought that I just personally seen a huge increase in people being available to come into appointments more than they used to be when they were working, you know, the traditional working since health professionals are calling on the Government to set out a long-term plan to help those with chronic care needs. The Irish Hospital consultants Association said shortages and staffing and capacity, need to be addressed, consultant rheumatologist, Dr Laura Durcan said there should be better outpatient facilities. We need to be able to see people in clinics, though some of that is that you know we have kind of 830 until post across the country. There are definitely chairs that need bombs and them to see these patients to look after them but the other piece of factors they need clinic space so there needs to be space for people to have what we call and later you are, you know, chronic care and that that does keep them well and that's your news at 4 minutes past 10 over the line in Association with Oxi generation Oxi generation has used by professionals for sports injuries to help rapid return to play reduces pains and risk of re-injury C Cox, E generation .com for more. We're here for another hour because we want to look forward now to Galway versus Roscommon on Sunday in Pearse Stadium, one one 45. The throw-in time at

Publication:	Kildare FM	Media Cost (€):	92	
Date:	Friday, May 27, 2022	Reach	78,000	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	10	

KFM @ 27-May-2022 09:16 - (Irish)

sector and he said his concern is when your huge companies that can make you wine and dine policy makers now, there's no guarantee that lobbying around gambling regulation Bill was happening, but there is a possibility. Indeed times Ireland on monkeypox is not a gay disease has a health expert Yeah and as he says in the the Times Ireland and the high numbers found in the community are coincidental. According to the public health experts. The first confirmed case of monkeypox was detected on the island of Ireland. Yesterday, the Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland recorded a case of the virus as the number of infections continues to rise throughout Europe. The UK has detected over 80 cases of the disease. But so far the ECDC has said that the risk to the general population of catching diseases low Gerald Barry, a virologist at UCD said that gay and bisexual people were not more susceptible to contracting the disease in the general population and that the current frequency of the disease. one in that community was a consequence of random effect, he told the Times that it is true that to say that monkeypox is to be more frequently occurring in certain cohorts of the population but there's probably a founder effect in the sense that However this got into Europe. It seems to be associated with our population, he says. It's a Quinn said. That's all right in the Journal.ie Donations oral health is at risk. Ciara why Yes a severe shortage of dentists is how, where the chief executive of the Irish Dental Association Fintan Horan explained the situation and described the situation. He said that many parts of this country. Kids are not being seen by dentist until after they enter secondary school. He called it incomprehensible and it's so important. He goes on to note a children need to see their dentists. The comments come as Stephen Donnelly, who is the health minister has told the Dáil that the scheme, the long-term scheme that's needed new and sustainable that make sure that everybody, whether on a medical card or not, can get access to affordable high-quality oral healthcare previously. I've spoken to Fenton, about the situation with people who are medical cards are finding it basically near impossible to get an appointment with the dentist and they are having to fork out so much money, even though they do have a medical card or Ulster in horrific pain for a very long amount of time and I think I come to your head or your teeth. They are the two worst pains, you can get absolutely to take a tell you're a bad headache. Indeed for those people with migraine lads before we call lets said to a nod to the great Ray Liotta who died. What the only 61 side can't sleep the wonderful star of Goodfellas, which is one of the most incredible films have ever seen. Yes 67 Yeah Yeah and Donald Clarke is writing that his career has ended unexpectedly suddenly and he died in his sleep while he was in the Dominican Republic. I believe he was with their his fiancée at the time he was shooting a movie dangerous waters and video game enthusiast notes here will have less To his voice for hours on I don't know if you play duty a Grand theft Auto, he was Tom Eva said he in that game Grand theft Auto vice city but people will remember him best as the Irish man among Italians he was in good fellows obviously directed by Martin Scorsese a from 19 Ninety. He goes on to talk about his life a bit here. He was born and raised in Newark, New Jersey. Over in the States. Obviously, was adopted from an orphanage at just 6 months old. By offered in Mary Lota but he then later hired a private detective to track down his Irish mother, it seems the reunion went well, he remained attached to the Italian American side of his family in which he was brought up and stay close to his pals. He had made back in kindergarten but was also obviously very much affiliated with the Irish, Yeah, Yeah. An Irish mother and there's another Irish connection that he had as well. I'm not sure what the other Irish connection was but yeah half-Irish, never knew that but what a great guy. Great actor and one of us so another one has gone off to the Hollywood studio in the sky all right lads, those are the stories making headlines to the Independent, the examiner times Ireland ie TheJournal.ie and elsewhere as well. Police are the cure with the love OK I I and she's right. I did I. Let's go, do you know I

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The 8 at 8: Friday

Healthcare insiders analyse the system, a severe shortage of dentists and cost of living fears.

2 minutes ago

Views

Comments

GOOD MORNING.

Here's all the news that you need to know as you start your day.

Healthcare insiders analyse system

Ireland's healthcare system is frequently hit with criticism and suggestions for how it can be improved.

Progress on the Sláintecare overhaul has been slow. In the meantime, patients and staff continue with the system in place.

In our lead story this morning , Orla Dwyer asked healthcare workers: What one thing would you like to see happen to improve healthcare in Ireland?

Texas school shooting

Texas police are facing angry questions over why it took an hour to neutralise the gunman who murdered 19 small children and two teachers in Uvalde, as video emerged of desperate parents begging officers to storm the school.

In one jolty, nearly seven minute clip posted on YouTube, parents living a nightmare – a school shooting under way with their kids inside – are seen screaming expletives at police trying to keep them away from Robb Elementary School.

Severe shortage of dentists

The oral health of the nation is at risk due to a severe shortage of dentists working in Ireland, according to Fintan Hourihan, CEO of the [Irish Dental Association](#).

Speaking to The Journal , Hourihan said that in many parts of the country children are not being seen by a dentist until they enter secondary school.

“That's just incomprehensible. It is so important for children to see the dentist as early as possible.

Cost of living

New research has found that cost of living increases are now the dominant issue among consumers with 81% of respondents saying they are a key concern – up from 62% just three months ago.

It found that 62% of people feel they will have to cut back on food spending in response to sharp price rises, while 53% of people fear they will be unable to pay higher energy bills.

Teenage cyclist critically injured

A cyclist in her teens was seriously injured in a collision with a person driving a car in Co Waterford.

Gardaí attended the scene of the incident, which occurred on the Clonea Road in Dungarvan at approximately 4pm yesterday.

The cyclist was taken by helicopter to Cork University Hospital where she remains in critical condition.

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Ukraine accuses Moscow of 'genocide'

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy accused Moscow of carrying out a “genocide” in the eastern region of Donbas, where the city of Severodonetsk is suffering an onslaught of Russian shelling.

In his daily televised address, Zelenskyy condemned Moscow's brutal assault on the Donbas adding that its bombardment could leave the entire region "uninhabited".

Ray Liotta tributes


Martin Scorsese and Robert De Niro led tributes to Goodfellas star Ray Liotta , who died aged 67 yesterday.

Scorsese, who directed both actors in the 1990 film, praised the "uniquely gifted" and "courageous" performer, adding he would "always be proud" of the work they had done together.

Sunny weekend in store

Met Eireann says we're in for a weekend of sunshine. It will be sunny in most parts of the country today, with highs of 19 degrees. The good weather will continue tomorrow, when the mercury is set to hit 20 degrees in certain areas.

Short URL

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Nation's oral health at risk as children not seeing a dentist until their teens

Health Minister Stephen Donnelly said not everyone is getting the high-quality dental care they deserve.
6 minutes ago

Views

Comments

THE ORAL HEALTH of the nation is at risk due to a severe shortage of dentists working in Ireland, according to Fintan Hourihan, CEO of the [Irish Dental Association](#).

Speaking to The Journal , Hourihan said that in many parts of the country children are not being seen by a dentist until they enter secondary school.

"That's just incomprehensible. It is so important for children to see the dentist as early as possible.

"If the first time some children are seeing the dentist is when they enter secondary school, it's simply way too late. There's damage being done, those poor oral health habits have been formed and need to be addressed at an early stage," he said.

If there are not enough dentists working in Ireland, then the health of the nation will suffer, said Hourihan.

His comments come as Health Minister Stephen Donnelly told the Dáil that a new, sustainable, long-term scheme is needed "that makes sure that everybody, whether on a medical card or not, can get access to affordable, high-quality [Oral Healthcare](#) when they need it".

"Unfortunately, at the moment, that simply is not the case for too many people," he acknowledged.

The Oireachtas Public Accounts Committee (PAC) was also told yesterday the percentage of members of the public who didn't receive an appointment was north of 50%.

Severe shortage of dentists

"When the oral health of the nation suffers, the people who suffer most are usually the people who have the greatest oral health need and the least amount of income to afford dental care. So the entire oral health of the nation is going to suffer.

"There'll be a disproportionate or worsening of oral health in lower income groups, and that's what what dentists are reporting to us all the time," said Hourihan.

Sinn Féin's health spokesperson David Cullinane told the health minister that in many parts of the country people who have medical cards cannot get access to dental treatment simply because the scheme has collapsed.

Hourihan agreed that the medical card scheme operated by Department of Health has collapsed.

He said the issue of some children not being seen until they are teenagers has "been a problem which has been highlighted over many years" by the dental association and by dentists.

"The Health Department and the HSE has been made more aware of it. And now, very belatedly, they seem to be waking up to it," he told The Journal.

"Dentists now reaching a stage where they tell us they thought they had seen it all but they are seeing significant deterioration in the oral health of the nation," he added.

Why are there a shortage of dentists?

Hourihan said there is a serious shortage of dentists for a number of reasons.

The two dental schools in Cork and Dublin are not training enough dentists that will remain in Ireland.

In more recent times, about 200 new dentists would be added to the register each year, but that has fallen to around 70.

"The problem is that the two schools are grossly under resourced."

In order to make up for the shortfall in funding, Hourihan said the dental schools have been forced to take in students from overseas who pay significantly more in fees than Irish students.

"What that means is there are fewer places for graduates from Irish secondary level schools," he said.

As many of the dental students from abroad come from Canada or the far East, they tend to return home once they have completed their studies.

There is also a greater incidence of dental students providing facial aesthetics, such as botox, fillers, anti-wrinkle injections and not partaking in the typical dentistry industry, he acknowledged. Dentists that carry out such non-surgical procedures are regulated by the [Irish Dental Association](#), while other businesses in the beauty industry that offer such services are not regulated.

A vocational training scheme similar to the one medical doctors undertake, where they spend a year as interns and they move around between the public and the private specialties, was also in place for dentists a number of years ago, explained Hourihan.

However, it was abolished in 2010.

'Retrograde step'

Hourihan said the dental association has been saying for the last decade that the decision to abolish the vocational training scheme "was a very retrograde step".

"There are very obvious things that could be done to make the public service more attractive, but in terms of dentistry overall, the problem ultimately is the population and demand for dentistry is increasing on the one hand, while the supply of dentists is unable to keep up," he said.

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Even within the private sector, some customers are waiting months for appointments, added Hourihan.

He added:

"The HSE and the Department of Health have been told this for many years and have ignored it until it has now reached a critical stage. So it's not for the want of having been told there's a problem."

Secretary General of the Department of Health Robert Watt was also asked about the deteriorating dental provisions in the country during a sitting of the PAC.

The chair of the committee said: "I saw a dentist at eight or nine years of age. My grandchild is 16 and still hasn't seen a school dentist."

Watt said the department had consultations with the [Irish Dental Association](#) and health minister on 12 April where "substantial increase" including the reintroduction of the scale and polish and an increase in fees was agreed from 1 May.

"But there is clearly a problem and the problem. It is a shortage of dentists, more generally, and we have been in discussions about how can we increase the number of dentists and train more dentists.

The issue of salary has not been discussed with dentists, he added, but said "I think it's certainly worthy of consideration".

"Clearly, we'd have to think about that and how could we make the salaries attractive, how could we ensure that that people who could have a career in dentistry could choose the public system over the alternatives," said Watt.

Student places

A spokesperson from the Department of Further Education said there is no quota placed on dental courses by the department and therefore the places offered are a matter for the higher education institutions, in line with their autonomy.

"However due to the high level of practical work involved there are material constraints on the number of students that can be accepted onto dentistry courses," they said.

The statement said the Further Education department officials are continuing to engage with the Department of Health and other relevant stakeholders "to ensure that we can continue to deliver graduates with the skills necessary to support our healthcare system and support the strategic workforce planning by the health sector".

"The ongoing discussions are in relation to both the increases that can be made in the supply of healthcare graduates in the short term, through the immediate provision of additional places, and the longer term planning being undertaken around future skills needs in the health services."

The Funding the Future policy document published this month aims to drive skills and engagement, with a particular focus on essential public services.

Short URL



Prison service set to pay €3m for dental care to inmates

Darragh McDonagh

The Irish Prison Service expects to pay as much as €3m for regular check-ups, fillings, and other dental services provided to inmates in seven of its 12 detention facilities over the next eight years.

Six of the seven prisons have fully equipped dental surgeries on their campuses, while treatment is provided off-site in the case of the open centre at Shelton Abbey in Co Wicklow.

The anticipated outlay excludes Mountjoy and Cloverhill, and does not take into account the cost of providing equipment and consumables for dentists at the in-house surgeries.

The prison authority estimates that up to 2,880 inmates will require dental services at these six facilities each year.

Qualified professionals have been invited to tender for contracts to provide dental services at each of the seven institutions, and are expected to begin work in August or September.

The contracts are for a period of four years and may be extended for a further four years, according to tender documents. Spending under the agreements will amount to a maximum of €3m excluding VAT.


The range of services provided will be comparable to those available to medical card holders, including an annual check-up, emergency care, denture repair, extractions, and fillings.

Dental clinics will be held once a fortnight in Cork, Limerick, Castlereagh, and Portlaoise, and once a month in Loughan House open prison. One and a half sessions a week will be held in Midlands Prison, which accounts for the biggest



estimated cost of €640,000.

The anticipated spend on dental services for inmates in Limerick Prison is €360,000, while €280,000 is expected to be spent in respect of prisoners in Portlaoise, Cork, and Castlereagh.

Services provided at Shelton Abbey and Loughan House will cost around €200,000 each.

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Irish Prison Service to spend €3m on dental check-ups for inmates

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Six of the seven prisons have fully equipped dental surgeries on their campuses, while treatment is provided off-site in the case of the open centre at Shelton Abbey in Co Wicklow.

The anticipated outlay excludes major institutions like Mountjoy and Cloverhill, and does not take into account the cost of providing equipment and consumables for dentists at the in-house surgeries.

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[Read More](#)

Prison Service agrees review over financial catering matters

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“The [prison service] aims to deliver a quality of healthcare reflective of that available to those holding medical cards in the wider community, taking into consideration the constraints that custody imposes,” it states in the tender documents.

“For onsite contracts, the [prison service] will provide a fully equipped **Dental Surgery** and will make appropriate consumables available... buildings and equipment may be added at the same or different locations as... the operational circumstances dictate,” it adds.

[Read More](#)

Prison Service spends €320k on TVs, Sky Sports and Netflix for inmates

Caption:

The anticipated outlay excludes major institutions like Mountjoy and Cloverhill.



Dental services for medical card holders expanded

By Dermot Keyes

THE expansion of dental services will assist medical card holders in Waterford to access an increased level of dental care.

"Approval has been given for increases in the fees payable to contracted dentists for a number of items, including examinations, fillings and the reintroduction of cleaning (Scale and Polish) for medical card patients," said Minister of State Mary Butler (FF).

"These proposals are designed to address not only issues around services for medical card patients in Waterford and throughout the country, but also the concerns expressed by dentists about the viability of the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS)."

Minister Butler added: "I am particularly encouraged by the reintroduction of the Scale and Polish to this scheme. Professional dental cleanings are important preventative procedures in maintaining one's oral health in the longer term."

It is really positive news that such services will be more readily available to medical card holders



in Waterford as a result of this expansion of services."

The Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS) provides dental care, free of charge to medical

card holders aged 16 and over. These services are provided by independent dental practitioners who have a contract with the HSE.

Meanwhile, Minister Butler

stated that Health Minister Stephen Donnelly (FF) has committed to a root-and-branch review of the DTSS to align the scheme with the National Oral Health Policy.

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Irish students miss out on dental places due to reliance on overseas fees

Applicants to dental schools, who are getting full marks in the Leaving Cert, are missing out on places because colleges rely on fees from international students for funding.

The head of Cork Dental School, Christine McCreary, said as much as 50% of the class's intake has to come from overseas, mainly Canada, Malaysia and Singapore, in order to 'balance the books' because otherwise they couldn't afford the huge running costs.

Not only are Irish students missing out on places, but it is also contributing to the shortage of dentists here as most international students return home once they graduate.

The president of the [Irish Dental Association](#) (IDA), Dr. Caroline Robins, warned last week that the number of new dentists each year needs to double in order to meet demand and that the dental schools are not producing sufficient numbers of graduates.

There are around 2,000 dentists practising in Ireland according to the IDA, who have been raising concerns over shortages since 2017. There are only two colleges in Ireland that offer undergraduate dental training, Trinity College

Dublin and University College Cork, and between them they graduate about 90 dentists a year. But only around two-thirds of these graduates register with the Dental Council annually, according to the IDA.

For this year's intake, EU students doing undergraduate [Dental Surgery](#) at UCC will pay €9,630 while international students will be charged €46,000. At Trinity College Dublin fees for EU students are €9,339 and for international students are up to €49,500.

Dr. McCreary said that Cork Dental School will be taking 48 students this year, of which 26 will be Irish or EU students and 22 will be international.

She said: 'We will get many more applicants than 26. We are grossly oversubscribed. In the last couple of years, we've had people with 625 points, the maximum you can get in the Leaving Certificate, that have not got a place here.

'The international cohort brings many benefits to the course but I think to have to rely on them completely for the money to fund your programme is a concern.

'Nearly half our students are foreign and we have to do that to balance our books because we're not getting enough money. It's the most expensive undergraduate training programme there is in any country. It's a huge running cost and, basically, we can't afford it.'

UCC got planning permission in 2019 to build a new dental school and hospital which was due to be completed by next year. But now Dr. McCreary says that the project is 'dead in the water' because she has 'begged the Government for money' and has got nowhere.

She said that the project is 'funded completely on the business model using international students, of taking extra international students to pay back the mortgage.

'Now, unfortunately with the way building costs are going, we can no longer progress that project because it has become so expensive.' Another reason for the shortage of graduates is that many are choosing to practice cosmetics rather than general dentistry.

Dr. McCreary criticised the lack of regulation in the cosmetics sector, which she described as a 'money-spinner' for doctors and dentists.

She said: 'For a society that's supposed to be a first-world society, the oral health of your citizens is a marker of lots of other things and yet they pay lip service to it.'

The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science said: 'Ongoing discussions are in relation to both the increases that can be made in the supply of healthcare graduates in the short term, through the immediate provision of additional places, and the longer-term planning being undertaken around future skills needs in the health services.'

Have you got children doing the Leaving Certificate this year? Have you noticed a delay in getting dental appointments since the start of the pandemic? Chat about it on our discussion boards

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news@dailymail.ie

'We are grossly oversubscribed' Caption: Running costs: Dr Christine McCreary

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RTE Radio 1 @ 13-May-2022 10:45 - (dental) Part 1

also for the parents and carers. Do you know might find a very emotional and very you know. Understandably, find it difficult to watch their child possibly the under stress in the dental surgery know I know more you knowledge is power. I know a lot more and I I I manage the autistic patient very differently and I'm much more accommodating. As a result and I understand the emotions that the patient and the family feels and I also understand more about the new Road. The first person, so for me, the dentist. Now I know that I dental surgery is set up for your typical patients a and I know I realise, with the euro. The first patient, I don't need him or her to conform for me only daft. The dental surgery for them. So if they need to stay in art world or squeal whatever might feel a thing to do to regulatory matters, I might be doing the dental examination on the floor on the windowsill. Police and helping the child acclimatise and have a look at her teeth, I hope, be discussing diet and brushing techniques and setting them up for a lifetime of a hostel dental experience is. So, do you know what's coming out in between the lines of what you're both saying here is that you are doing an awful lot of learning on the job. Is this not something that's basically a part of the curriculum, Jennifer in dental school it actually is that we are not thought special card industry in dental school. However, the school we learn over overtime and that's part of what Julian and I are doing with this presentation as we aim to empower, educate and enable dentist to manage the artistic Asian more effectively in the dental surgery, so you know, we interviewed them the tools and strategies, they need to, hopefully, manage the autistic patients throughout their life that make the whole dental experience more autism-friendly. How often do you end up having to use station Julian and an interest In question really autism is a spectrum for you're gonna have a very wide range of abilities with an ability to tolerate dental treatment and I would use station I guess because I'm a referral service for dentist, I would use innovation, probably more than the average then to say would need to use the nation. It's great to have it as as an adjunct to care. We all need that when it's necessary. Is there an ethical question attached to using it on somebody who can't give informed consent about what is involved in being knocked out or is this ultimately in their best interests, that their dental hygiene is maintained and Yeah I mean consent comes into us. We are working with the new developments in this area the inform decision-making Act is something that you know the the that is coming to the fore and so it will be very much of relevance who me in my practice, where some of my patients may struggle to give their informed consent and will work with the developments in that area as best we can but you you know having a duty of care as a dentist to make sure that somebody isn't in pain or suffering with the infection did a that's a really sorry one. How would you even begin to explain to James and I'm going to take you to 10 to stand, we're going to knock you out. But it's for your own good, Yeah, Yeah, though the tough one you know and and I guess for myself. There's a lot of detail. You know, I had to go through through with them in detail in advance and he wasn't too happy about the situation but he knew it was for. It was our best interests. But when I saw I had to have identity. Last year he had to be put to sleep for his dentistry, I knew you would manage to have it done in a normal dental setting so to speak, so we had to go into the private sector to be local services for him because they were to do that for him through the HSE, so I thank you have a collection of the dentists and thankfully have resources to afford for him to get the necessary services but it's still the costs are high without a silver in 2000, but a lot of these construction that because you need an anaesthesia \$ just present for the duration. Cricket correct and healthy to see will see autism as a a medical condition. He wasn't able to get his identity don't through the HSE but I actually really to get an excellent service in the private sector so could is that dilemma that arises for an awful lot of people that classification of autism. Yeah, I mean if you are talking about the that difficulty accessing and that's something that I face every day. My practice. You know I'm working within the private sector and I really enjoy working in this field and I find it very fulfilling. But in an ideal world I would be the

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Date:	Friday, May 13, 2022	Reach	30,428	
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Graduate dentist numbers need to double to halt 'crisis'

THE number of new dentists each year needs to double in order to meet demand, according to the [Irish Dental Association](#).

President of the IDA Dr Caroline Robins said that at least 500 graduate dentists are needed each year to meet the needs of a rising population.

Only 200 are currently registering with the Dental Council each year.

Dr Robins said the two dental schools at University College Cork and Trinity College Dublin do not produce enough dentists to meet demand.

Only about a third of those registering with the Dental Council each year come from Irish dental schools, with the majority coming from abroad.

Dr Robins called for a prioritisation of the expansion of the dental school at University College Cork which 'has been long promised but not delivered'.

She said: 'Dental practices are unable to deal with the volume of patients that are arriving to their clinics, and recruitment of associate dentists, dental hygienists and dental nurses is at an all-time low.

'The number of graduates remaining in Ireland after graduation and training as GDPs [general dental practitioner] has fallen to crisis levels.'

An IDA spokesman told the Irish Daily Mail that some Irish graduates are choosing to move into cosmetic dentistry because of better pay.

He said: 'The pay and conditions within public dentistry has been a barrier to recruitment and that's on top of the fact that we're not graduating enough dentists.

'We've done surveys of our members and we've heard that there are practices where it is taking them six months to find an appropriate candidate and there's some that haven't found any.

'Public dentistry being under-resourced has led to a massive waiting list of the School Dental Screening Programme.

'There's a waiting list of over 100,000 children that are eligible to be seen on that scheme but there's just not enough public dentists. This leads to a worsening situation nationally in terms of oral health care.'

He added that staff shortages are causing long waits for dental surgery, with 2,950 children on public dental surgery lists for procedures under general anaesthetic and some waiting for as long as six years. The association also called for the Government to reform the medical card scheme, estimating that less than 700 dentists remain on the scheme.

Chief executive Fintan Hourihan said: 'Dentists have consistently voiced their concerns regarding the limitations of the scheme, the red tape dentists must follow to treat medical card patients, and the limited materials they can use while treating medical card patients.

'What we see now is a twotier system whereby private patients are subsidising medical card patients yet medical card patients are not afforded the same treatment plans as private patients.

'Dentists want the autonomy to treat patients as necessary according to their needs.'

Health Minister Stephen Donnelly recently allocated an additional €10million to the scheme to allow for a fee increase for contracted dentists and the reintroduction of scale and polish treatments for medical card holders.

The Department of Further and Higher Education was contacted for comment regarding increasing places on dentistry courses.

news@dailymail.ie

'Recruitment is at an all-time low' Caption: Need: Dr Caroline Robins

Publication:	kildare-nationalist.ie	Media Cost (€):	3	
Date:	Thursday, May 12, 2022	Reach	340	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	401	

Number of dental graduates leaving Ireland causing ‘crisis level’ shortages

The newly elected president of the [Irish Dental Association](#) has said urgent changes are needed within the industry before Ireland reaches a “crisis point”.

Dr Caroline Robins called on the Government to intervene over the medical card scheme, and invest in public dentist recruitment and the training of dental graduates.

The association said dental clinics are unable to deal with the current volume of patients as “recruitment of associate dentists, dental hygienists and dental nurses is at an all-time low”.

Dr Robins said the number of dental students remaining in Ireland after their graduation and training as general dental practitioners (GDPs) has fallen to “crisis levels”.

“Of the 200 dentists who register with the dental council each year, only a fraction of those come from the two dental schools.

“We estimate we need at least 500 graduate dentists per annum to meet the needs of rising population and to replace retiring dentists,” Dr Robins added.

In order to address the shortages, the association has called for the Government to “invest thoroughly across all areas of dentistry”.

Medical cards

The association is also seeking an overhaul of the current medical card (DTSS) scheme, to replace it with a “fit-for-purpose scheme that reflects modern dental practices and standards”.


Fintan Hourihan, the [Irish Dental Association](#)’s chief executive, said it is estimated that less than 700 dentists around the country remain on the medical card scheme, which he said is a “testament to the issues within the scheme”.

“Dentists have consistently voiced their concerns regarding the limitations of the scheme, the red tape dentists must follow to treat medical card patients, and the limited materials they can use while treating medical card patients,” Mr Hourihan said.

“What we see now is a two-tier system whereby private patients are subsidising medical card patients, yet medical card patients are not afforded the same treatment plans as private patients.

“Dentists want the autonomy to treat patients as necessary according to their needs,” he added.

The association invited Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly to engage with them regarding a reformed scheme, adding that measures announced in April which expanded the number of treatments available to medical card-holders and increased the coverage of costs will “act as no more than a band-aid for the current scheme which is doomed to collapse”.

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Date:	Thursday, May 12, 2022	Reach	600,000	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	10	

RTE 1 @ 12-May-2022 18:36 - (Irish)

not necessarily what older people want. If you've got family living locally, you have a better chance of getting some assistance. We are all getting older. Mary Butler said that many workers had left home care during the pandemic. She She has up a planning group to look at how they can attract more staff into the sector. Sinead Hussey, RTE News. Dentists have called for urgent reform of the medical card scheme, saying it's no longer fit for purpose. The **Irish** Dental Association is holding its AGM in Galway, where there have also been calls for the government to intervene in the recruitment and retention of public dentists before a crisis point is reached. This dental practice at Ayr Square in Galway is inundated in Galway is inundated with soaring patient demand. And looking to recruit more dentists, hygienists and nurses. dentists, hygienists and nurses. But finding them is a struggle. The Dental Association suggests there is a shortage of 500 dentists across both public and private sectors. We have been advertising locally, abroad, we emphasised the benefits of working in the west of Ireland and we are still struggling. Recruitment, retention and training of graduates will be a key as the **Irish** Dental Association gathers for its conference. gathers for its conference. There are also renewed calls for a radical overhaul of the medical card scheme. It's hopeless. A patient with a medical card comes and sits in your chair and you are immediately restricted by what you can provide for them and the materials you can use and the techniques you are expected to lose the to say it, but as a two tier system is wrong. There are now less than 700 dentists signed up to the medical card scheme. Only very recently have we moved away from the scheme. We have an ethical duty We have an ethical duty to provide a high standard of care and the medical card scheme doesn't have that option. Health Minister Stephen Donnelly has committed an extra E10 million to the scheme. Fees raised for contracted dentists. The Minister says that in the longer term, there will be a substantive overhaul dentist services. Teresa Mannion, RTE News, Galway. North Korea reported its first COVID-19 outbreak today, calling it the "gravest national emergency" and ordering a national lockdown. State media said the Omicron variant had been detected in the capital, Pyongyang. North Korea had never confirmed a Covid infection before though South Korean and US officials say there could have been earlier cases in the isolated country. In the UK, the Metropolitan Police say it has now made more than 100 referrals for fines as part of the investigation into gatherings held in Downing Street during the Covid-19 pandemic. In April, Prime Minister Boris Johnson apologised for receiving Johnson apologised for receiving a fine for breaking lockdown rules, but he refused to resign over it. He could receive further penalties for other gatherings, but did not receive one in this latest tranche of fines. Fishermen in Greencastle in Donegal have welcomed a new scheme which will allow them to tie up their vessels for two months and receive payments of up to almost 90,000 euro. The scheme, announced today, is in response to the negative response to the negative impact of Brexit on the industry. Fishing is at the heart of Greencastle, but the industry here has been hit badly by quota cuts due to Brexit, the new tie-up scheme is a response to that and will allow fishermen like Cara Rawdon tie up his vessel for two months and receive a payment, a third of which he must give to his crew. Badly needed. Because of the horrendous effect of Brexit, we now have a bigger fleet than we have a quota to catch. It is crucial that we are able to have a cash float. Without this by the end of the year these boats will be tied up. We lost 20% of our paddock. 20% of our haddock. That is huge for an area like this. We will work to make sure that the vessels are spread out across the period, June to October. This scheme is targeted at the whitefish sector but in Killybegs the organisation there says the pelagic sector, where they fish for the likes of ', was the worst affected and a special scheme recommended by the task force needs to be urgently expedited. But welcome as But welcome as these schemes are, many now feel the reality of brexit

Publication:	Shannonside	Media Cost (€):	856	
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Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	10	

Shannonside @ 12-May-2022 14:25 - (Irish)

Mental health as well. If you have something wrong with your teeth or if they're very discoloured or if the crocodile. Whatever the so much you can do cosmetically now for people and the implants, is what I'm thinking of as well. But I take it, most of that Norway would be covered. Even if a dentist was was are using the medical card scheme. A lot of options are taken away from us. I know the **Irish** dental Association and is keen to sit down with Government to discuss options for new schemes and their key. The **Irish** dental Association are keen to point out that there are many different styles of system could work one such system is a voucher scheme with a dentist would have the autonomy to utilise the value of the voucher on a particular treatment that 6, the individual. A good example was during lockdown. We saw a huge spike in the number of patients attending with anxiety related grinding plenty matching of the jaw to first IP come in stress levels and private patients were able to go for a reasonably modest 3 it would have a small could explain it made to protect their teeth, whereas the the medical card. There is no such provision so that we really simple treatment and unfortunately they ask a patient to to pay privately, there's no other treatment option for for the a scenario. So, so the only available option and a medical card would be to take a prescription for a g6 like a painkiller, you know, and that's the best we can offer to medical card but it would be such a simple treatment for a health service for all health service to provide out you've been talking about this, you've been leaving the medical card scheme in your drawers and I think in fairness to dentist, some of them were doing it almost deliberately to put pressure on the Government in recent years to say look, we can't do it. Look how many of us have left. It's totally unworkable, is not fit for purpose but sadly it hasn't worked. I think that's what's really the sad popular is that the only reason for the medical card scheme. As for the industries concerned have lost as long as it has is because the dentist providing that kind of care in the community have really been going way of above what you would expect a business owner to do you know they have been left. We have been utilising their private patients to supplement the losses that there incurring under the medical card scheme. I think probably the beginning of Covid and and the fact that all the clinics or shutdown of under severe restrictions really sort of brought shopping the focus that that situation just can't continue. And it's hard because a lot of practitioners are living in and working in the communities they know everybody and it's hard to see somebody suffering forward to catch their eye over to check out. No, I can't do what I've been previously been doing for them for decades, you know. It is upsetting for those thank all right is, and we're gonna have to leave it there. Thank you so much for talking to us this afternoon and taking the call that said Doctor will remember their from Ross create that is about it from us on the show this afternoon as he and S has been in touch from balance. Let's say and enter sworn take on medical-card patients now when you ring them and, yeah, I think what will saying there might explain some of that to you. Vanessa, they're not totally thrilled about this situation either and, in fairness, they've been calling on the Government to change it. Nobody has been listening for the past 7 or 8 years. I say at this stage. All right, that's it from the show will talk to you tomorrow. Bye bye North Midlands credit union. Your local credit union in Longford town make use of our extensive range of online services, register your account on North Midlands. See you dot ie with online access. You can pay bills transfer money, get your eStatements and apply for a loan on in the comfort of your home. Corless on over Or 3 double 3.1 5.3 loans are subject to approval.

Publication:	Echolive.ie	Media Cost (€):	137	
Date:	Thursday, May 12, 2022	Reach	10,880	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	425	

Number of dental graduates leaving Ireland causing 'crisis level' shortages

The new president of the [Irish Dental Association](#) said changes must be made to recruitment and training before Ireland reaches a crisis point

Muireann Duffy

The newly elected president of the [Irish Dental Association](#) has said urgent changes are needed within the industry before Ireland reaches a "crisis point".

Dr Caroline Robins called on the Government to intervene over the medical card scheme, and invest in public dentist recruitment and the training of dental graduates.

The association said dental clinics are unable to deal with the current volume of patients as "recruitment of associate dentists, dental hygienists and dental nurses is at an all-time low".

Dr Robins said the number of dental students remaining in Ireland after their graduation and training as general dental practitioners (GDPs) has fallen to "crisis levels".

"Of the 200 dentists who register with the dental council each year, only a fraction of those come from the two dental schools.

"We estimate we need at least 500 graduate dentists per annum to meet the needs of rising population and to replace retiring dentists," Dr Robins added.

In order to address the shortages, the association has called for the Government to "invest thoroughly across all areas of dentistry".

Medical cards

The association is also seeking an overhaul of the current medical card (DTSS) scheme, to replace it with a "fit-for-purpose scheme that reflects modern dental practices and standards".

Fintan Hourihan, the [Irish Dental Association](#)'s chief executive, said it is estimated that less than 700 dentists around the country remain on the medical card scheme, which he said is a "testament to the issues within the scheme".

"Dentists have consistently voiced their concerns regarding the limitations of the scheme, the red tape dentists must follow to treat medical card patients, and the limited materials they can use while treating medical card patients," Mr Hourihan said.

"What we see now is a two-tier system whereby private patients are subsidising medical card patients, yet medical card patients are not afforded the same treatment plans as private patients.

"Dentists want the autonomy to treat patients as necessary according to their needs," he added.

The association invited Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly to engage with them regarding a reformed scheme, adding that measures announced in April which expanded the number of treatments available to medical card-holders and increased the coverage of costs will "act as no more than a band-aid for the current scheme which is doomed to collapse".

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Date:	Thursday, May 12, 2022	Reach	986	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	1,061	

Newly elected President of the **Irish Dental Association** calls on Government to enact sweeping reforms in Dentistry before we reach crisis point

Newly elected President of the **Irish Dental Association** calls on Government to enact sweeping reforms in Dentistry before we reach crisis point

“We need the Government to intervene in the medical card scheme, public dentist recruitment and the training of dental graduates immediately before we reach crisis levels.” – Dr Caroline Robins, Newly elected President of the **Irish Dental Association** (IDA)

The **Irish Dental Association** has called on the Government to reform the medical card (DTSS) scheme and replace it with a fit-for-purpose scheme that reflects modern dental practices and standards

Recruitment and retention of dentists is at an all time low, and investment in Irish dental schools is urgently needed. Only 35% of dental graduates remain practicing in Ireland, causing major dental shortages

Dr Caroline Robins comment : “We need the Government to intervene in the recruitment and retention of public dentists and to invest in the training of dental students immediately before we reach a crisis in dentistry”

Newly elected President of the **Irish Dental Association** (IDA), Dr Caroline Robins, has called on the Irish Government to urgently push through sweeping reforms within Irish dentistry before the profession reaches crisis point.

Dr Robins' comments come in advance of the **Irish Dental Association** AGM, which takes place on Thursday (12 May). The AGM is expected to include motions relating to both the reform of the Dentists Act and the Irish Medical Card Scheme, to prevent dentists leaving the scheme in even greater numbers.

Comment

According to Dr Robins ,” The pressure from dental patients will not and cannot be relieved until proper investment is made. We need the Government to intervene in the medical card scheme, public dentist recruitment and the training of dental graduates immediately before we reach crisis levels.

“Dental practices are unable to deal with the volume of patients that are arriving to their clinics, and recruitment of associate dentists, dental hygienists and dental nurses is at an all-time low. The number of graduates remaining in Ireland after graduation and training as GDPs has fallen to crisis levels.

“Of the 200 dentists who register with the dental council each year, only a fraction of those come from the two dental schools. We estimate we need at least 500 graduate dentists per annum to meet the needs of rising population and to replace retiring dentists. We in the **Irish Dental Association** have called on the Government to invest thoroughly across all areas of dentistry, but particularly in the higher education institutes such as UCC, where funding for the expansion of the dental school has been promised for years but not delivered.”

The event, which is taking place in person for the first time in two years, will feature an inaugural address by President elect Dr Caroline Robins, whose speech will outline her priorities and those of the wider dental profession as she begins her tenure as president.

Fintan Hourihan, CEO of the **Irish Dental Association**, will also speak at the AGM, addressing amongst other issues, the reform of the DTSS/medical card scheme, the Dentists Act and the future resourcing of dentists by the HSE.

Staffing our clinics

Addressing the immediate issue of industry wide staff shortages, the new president, Dr Robins said: “We need to be able to staff our clinics to meet the needs of our patients and to offer the best care we can possibly give to them. But we also need to plan into the future and consideration for future patient needs is not being conducted whatsoever. We need an urgent review of the training of dentists to mitigate for the ultimate mismatch of patients to dentists.

“The two dental schools, in UCC and TCD, do not produce an adequate number of dentists to meet patient demands. The dental school in Cork has been long promised but not delivered leading to further anxiety for patients seeking dental care. Without investment in our future, Irish dentistry will suffer the consequences and the patients will be burdened the most by poor forward planning.”

A Two-Tier System

According to [Irish Dental Association](#) CEO, Fintan Hourihan, "The [Irish Dental Association](#) commissioned an independent paper by Professor Ciaran O'Neill, Professor of Health Economics at Queen's University Belfast, that would completely modernise our current medical card scheme. We estimate less than 700 dentists remain on the scheme, a testament to the issues within the scheme.

"We have consulted the HSE and Department of Health officials in recent months to pursue the development of a totally new medical card scheme, one that meets the needs of both dentists and patients.

"Dentists have consistently voiced their concerns regarding the limitations of the scheme, the red tape dentists must follow to treat medical card patients, and the limited materials they can use while treating medical card patients.

"What we see now is a two-tier system whereby private patients are subsidising medical card patients yet medical card patients are not afforded the same treatment plans as private patients. Dentists want the autonomy to treat patients as necessary according to their needs.

"We invite the Minister for Health to engage with the Association and dentists to discuss and understand the value dentists can offer medical card patients through a wholly reformed scheme. We acknowledge the changes made in recent weeks by the Minister however we informed his officials that the changes will act as no more than a band-aid for the current scheme which is doomed to collapse."

Other speakers include:

Professor Bob Khanna (Professor of Facial Aesthetics at University of Seville and UK TV personality) on the art of creating aesthetically pleasing profiles.

Dr Jennifer Collins (general dental practitioner, Dublin) and Dr Gillian Smith (general dental practitioner, Co Wicklow) on how to remove barriers to help autistic patients better access dental care.


Dr Grace Kelly (Cardiff University School of Dentistry) on managing dental anxiety among patients in general dental practice.

Dr Slaine McGrath (general dental practitioner, London) on the role of social media in dentistry.

Dr Jennifer McCafferty (paediatric dentist, Cork) on managing and treating child patients and various techniques to restore teeth over extraction.


Professor Mike Lewis (Professor of Oral Medicine, Cardiff University) on anti-microbial resistance and primary care management.

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Date:	Thursday, May 12, 2022	Reach	600,000	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	10	

RTE 1 @ 12-May-2022 13:15 - (Irish)

The best opportunity to secure and preserve evidence is in the moment. The immediacy of the aftermath and the opportunity that were lost to investigate with investigative tools, not exhausted. The family were told, lies three years. were told lies for yers. were told lies for years. 25 years to the day he was murdered. Still to come: Still to come: After a poor recent run, can 'That's Rich' turn Ireland's Eurovision chances around in tonight's semi-final? Welcome back. Dentists have called for an urgent reform of the medical card scheme, saying it's no longer fit for purpose. The **Irish** Dental Association is holding its AGM in Galway, where there have also been calls for the government to intervene in the recruitment and retention of public dentists before a crisis point is reached. This dental practice in Galway is inundated with soaring patient demand. Looking to recruit more dentists, hygienists and nurses. But finding them is a struggle. The Association suggests there is a shortage of 500 dentists across public and private sectors. We advertise locally, abroad, the benefits of working in the west of Ireland and we are still struggling. Training of graduates will be a key as the **Irish** dental Association gathers for its conference. There are also renewed calls for a radical overhaul of the medical card scheme. It's hopeless. The patient comes and sits in your chair and you are immediately restricted by the Prince provide for them and the materials you can use and the techniques you are expected to lose the to say it, but as a two tier system is wrong. There are no less than 700 dentists signed up to the scheme. Only very recently have we moved away from the screen. We have an ethical duty to provide a high standard of care and the medical card scheme doesn't have that option. Health Minister Stephen Donnelly has committed extra money to the scheme. , the Minister says that in the longer term, there will be a substantive overhaul dentist services. The Chairman of the **Irish** Forest Owners group has said that this is the worst year out of the last 75 years for the amount of new **Irish** forestry planted. Nicholas Sweetman said that bureaucracy and regulation surrounding forestry in Ireland is unmanageable and that the situation will get worse unless there is significant change in policy. My parents plotted this about 21 years ago now. It's an absolutely wonderful place, so I make my living from this.

Publication:	Galway Bay FM	Media Cost (€):	98	
Date:	Thursday, May 12, 2022	Reach	139,000	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	10	

Galway Bay FM @ 12-May-2022 13:06 - (Irish)

The Bill as passed. Solidarity TD Mick Barry says the bill is invaluable for future workers but it could be done for all the workers in future. What a legacy. That would be for those Debenhams workers. Protesters are hoping that the bill is prioritised by the Enterprise and trade committee in the near future. Minister for the Environment Eamon Ryan will visit Galway city tomorrow. Eamon Ryan will travel to Galway for a series of engagements which will include a meeting with city and County councils. The Green party Minister will also address Galway chamber of Commerce has 8 honorary concludes at Wood Quay, where he will officiate at a private function involving the opening of a new constituency office for Galway. Green Party senator Pauline O'Reilly city cancers. Niall Murphy and Martin O'Connor and county cancer Allister McKinstry. Senator Reilly says he will also meet local cycle Group campaigners. It's a very important meeting that he be where he will be able to meet with the council but the executive and the councillors themselves and he'll also be meeting with groups on Friday, including cycling advocacy group and also the Galway chamber of Commerce. The HSE has confirmed A child has died from a probable case of Hepatitis. It's one of 6 cases identified in Ireland over the past 10 weeks in children aged between one and 12 years old. A second child has received a liver transplant. The world health organisation says at least 169 cases of acute hepatitis and children have been reported in the UK, EU and the US, a consultant endocrinologist at the core, Hospital, Limerick. Dr Mary Ryan says investigations are still ongoing to identify the cause of these illnesses were still under investigation, is what is causing it sparked ices information of deliver the normally causes we see, B, C, D and E but a den of ours, which is a few virus can use because respiratory disease in children and adults, but in these cases where we're being found is 75 % of cases that's been tested website as show a tenner virus when they deliver boxes. They are not finding a donor virus. The number of Covid patients in hospital has fallen to its lowest level in nearly 9 months, a drop to 242 this morning, the lowest since last August. This time last month, there are over 1000 people in hospital with the virus. 28 Covid patients are in intensive care. Dentists have told the Galway conference they need the government to introduce sweeping reforms and industry before the sector reaches crisis point. The [Irish](#) dental Association wants the current medical card scheme replaced with one that is modern and fit-for-purpose to stop dentists withdrawing from the scheme, the representative body also claims recruitment and retention of dentists is at an all-time low, with only 35 % of dental graduates remaining practising in Ireland. The Association is holding its AGM in the Galmont Hotel in Galway City today. Chief executive Fintan Holohan says the medical scheme simply isn't working dancers have found that the restrictions in terms of how they provide care which are related to keeping a taboo on underspend means they can't afford to continue with the scheme, so what that means is that patients are finding of more and more difficult to find a date and what we're saying is that an entirely new scheme is required the Clifden RNLI new launch a memory lifeboat are said to arrive at its permanent home in Connemara. This weekend the son Christopher carries with it, the name of over 10000 people on board put there by members of the public through a special fundraising initiative. The shaman class vessel is due to arrive in Clifton on Saturday around 12 30 pm after stopovers in Plymouth penned Lee, Ballycotton, Kinsale and Valencia on Sunday. The public is invited to view the new lifeboat on Clifton beach at low tide. From 9 30 am until 12 30 pm SEO points are likely to head last year's record high and random selection is expected to be used for high-demand courses. That's according to internal Government records, reported in the [Irish](#) times this morning. The policy commitment to keep Students grades no lower than last year, combined with high numbers of College applicants will lead to grade inflation, Carl O'Brien education Editor with the [Irish](#) Times, believes the system means marks aren't enough any more in the SEO college system is cruel. In many respects, but then this random selection process where which they use it, which is essentially a lottery is in many ways, brutal and and it is it hugely unfair to the students. They can spend so long achieved the grades required still not getting public lighting is being installed on the much use laneway linking the Rusheen Woods estate to Barna Road, Galway city council's roads department secured the funding from the National transport Authority, local cancer down the line, says that residents had expressed safety concerns about using the walkway as while short it's very secluded. It concluded area but it's why do you thought is for people that want to go from Chn Court Road on the Barna Road to up to treat in here and on being onto the black plum,

Publication:	South East Radio FM	Media Cost (€):	152	
Date:	Thursday, May 12, 2022	Reach	69,000	
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South East Radio FM @ 12-May-2022 13:05 - (Irish)

achieved the grades that are required and still not get in. The **Irish** dental Association says if the medical card scheme isn't reformed even more dentists will withdraw their services, then to start calling on the Government to introduce sweeping reforms before they reach crisis point. They say there are less than 700 dentists now practising in the scheme meaning one dentist has to cover about 2000 medical card patients Association which is holding its AGM in Galway today, also claims recruitment and retention is at an all-time low, with only 35 % of dental graduates practising in Ireland chief executive Fintan her hand says patients so be given a voucher to see their dentist. Yes, essentially people would know going to see the dentist that they have a notional voter in their back pocket which allows them to cover the cost of some of the treatments rather than having rules which are designed to limit how much the State is going to give the patient I Wish which compromise then the dental care provided by that the number of Covid patients in hospital has fallen to its lowest level in nearly 9 months it dropped to 242 this morning, the lowest since last August. This time last year, there were over 1000 in hospital with the virus, 28 code patients are in intensive care in Wexford general Hospital. There are 9 patients being treated for cold in 19 and two confirmed cases in the ICU. Freelance journalist Michael Freeman has expressed surprise that no official from Wexford County Council, was in attendance at an information meeting to discuss the proposed route for the greenway from Wexford to Rosslare meeting was advertised in the local press as an information meeting in the Talbot Hotel yesterday afternoon according to Mr. Freeman. There were about 10 members of public there, but no official From the council. In response, Mayor of Wexford Garry Laffan, says it is his understanding. There was an official from the Council. At the meeting, and there was no need for councillors to be in attendance, as the information is fed back to them. A council meetings. Yes, I did. I can understand his concerns, but it's my understanding that there was a representative of the council there and all times again I had yesterday so I'm only going on officially earlier departing. Unfortunately I don't think those appointed consultant meeting information days really councillors are not expected to be at them. We get a lot of the information behind the scenes from a council metres and red meats. With the people and possibly officials will spend the public go to these consultations and they have an issue that's theirs. They usually engage us then to go and represent them so that's just from the county council point of view from the official point of view and belatedly, that there was someone there on behalf of represent the Council at all times. But again, I would have to clarify that, so you have to be buried. Michael, I'm not sure, maybe he did realise that the guy there was left at the count. I'm not sure but again where as far as I'm led to believe today that there was someone there representing Council at all, it's 7 minutes past one Flo gas now offer 100 % green electricity. It feels good to know that as I could by grass here the powers coming from 100 % renewable sources also good to note a flow gasp and one tree for every person who makes the switch and the Cherry on top. You can get a welcome bonus worth up to 220 euro I put the savings towards this fancy new electric alone she's not bad. Not bad at all. The grass is definitely greener on the flow gas site. See for yourself. Terms and conditions apply. Switch to flow gas at Flogas dot ie to view our great range of offers or call us on 18 102, 100 5 to mainly dry. This afternoon, with some sunshine and just isolated showers. Highest temperatures of 13 to 16 degrees. Rugby world Cup is going to the United States. It's been confirmed that the men's tournament in 2031 will be held in America. The 2027 tournament has been awarded to Australia. Following a meeting of the World Rugby Council in Dublin, the 2025 women's world Cup will be staged in England with the 2029 renewal in Australia and 2033 event in the USA. Meanwhile, world champions South Africa will play Ireland in Dublin for the first time in 5 years this November. It will be the first of the Autumn Nations Series matches at the Aviva Stadium on Saturday, November 5th, the second test is against Fiji. one week later with Australia, to provide the opposition in the final test on Saturday November the 19 tickets will go on sale in July following the normal distribution to rugby clubs and soccer. Arsenal will guarantee themselves Champions League football next season if they defeat Tottenham Hotspur in the Premier League's North London Derby tonight. Kick-off at the new White Hart Lane is at seven. 45 the gap between the teams is 4 points with 3 games to go, so a victory for Spurs would put them right back into contention for 4th spot in golf. Seamus Power and John Murphy iwish

Publication:	midwestradio.ie	Media Cost (€):	1	
Date:	Thursday, May 12, 2022	Reach	500	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	112	

Irish Dental Association AGM underway in Galway

The **Irish Dental Association** says if the medical card scheme isn't reformed, even more dentists will withdraw their services.

Dentists are calling on the government to introduce sweeping reforms before they reach "crisis point".

They say there are less than 700 dentists now participating in the scheme, meaning each dentist has to cover about 2,000 medical card patients.

The Association, which is holding its AGM in Galway today, also claims recruitment and retention is at an all time low, with only 35 percent of dental graduates practicing in Ireland.

Chief Executive, Fintan Hourihan, says the medical scheme simply isn't working....

Publication:	RTE Radio 1	Media Cost (€):	1813	
Date:	Thursday, May 12, 2022	Reach	901,200	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	10	

RTE Radio 1 @ 12-May-2022 11:00 - (Irish)

to 13th see Drama Festival .ie Today with Claire Byrne on RTE Radio 1. Salah's go to the newsroom and to Brian Jennings, thank you, Clare. The British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and the European Commission vice president Maros Sefcovic have been holding a phone conference today amid deepening unease in Brussels and Dublin about the UK's plans to set aside elements of the Northern Ireland Protocol. According to a British Foreign Office spokesperson mistrust had described the Protocol as the greatest obstacle to forming and Northern Ireland Executive Mr. Ross also said the European Union must show more flexibility in talks over post-Brexit trade rules for Northern Ireland. Speaking on this programme rade McGuinness the European Commissioner for financial stability, said. Nobody wants to see a trade war between the UK and the EU. We have to try and believe it's the stretched at the moment that the UK Government is acting in good faith the Boris Johnson really want to sort out the problem. The protocol, but don't want to see this that he will be in the lead. I sometimes worry that was still having this debate about Brexit, rather than a discussion about how we resolve the problem in the protocol Finland's president and prime minister have issued a joint statement saying the country should submit an application to join the Nato military alliance without delay. The major policy shift has been triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Sweden is expected to make a decision on applying to join the alliance in the coming days. Nato has indicated that applications from both countries would be welcome. The newly elected president of the **Irish** dental Association said the Government must intervene in the recruitment and retention of public dentists before crisis point is reached. Dr Caroline Robbins is also calling for urgent reform of the medical card scheme, which he says is no longer fit for purpose. She was speaking in advance of the association's AGM which is taking place in Galway. Rte radio one weather with grand building a new home led planned help you your heating journey with their home heating design service than a glance . EU a mix of cloud and sunny spells today with a few scattered showers clearest in the East and South of the country, more persistent outbreaks of rain are expected to spread across Western and Northern areas. Towards evening. Highest temperatures 12 to 16 degrees, and that's all from the news. For now, thank you very much. Brian Finland's president and prime minister have issued a joint statement saying the country should submit an application to join the Nato military alliance without delay and Sweden is likely to follow suit The Atlantic military Alliance expects both countries to be granted membership quickly, which would mean an increased presence of troops in the northern Nordic region during the one-year ratification period you' D Dempsey is a senior fellow at Carnegie Europe and editor in chief of strategic Europe, in Berlin and joins us now duty, thank you very much for being with us on the programme today how significant is it in your view that both Sweden and Finland are considering joining Nato. I think it's very significant first hole one plan to because the other. These are two countries long-time U2 countries actually in this part of the Nordic region but they now want to join Nato, just two things. one is it closes this security vacuum in this Northern part of Europe, especially around the Arctic and the borders with Russia this depressing actually just confirms how important US-led transatlantic alliance has become after president data for the second time, Ukraine and all-out attack in Ukraine and the finally actually this actually increases the security of this part of Europe. Can you just give us an indication of how big a shift this is in the foreign policy of these two countries taking this step towards Nato it's it's a very big shift if he'd just gone back to England and Sweden. A bit like Ireland have this partnership for peace. They are. They have this membership action and membership relationship with nature, but not full membership, because they are neutral, but it's very important because until recently the public worth not is supporting any count debate a membership and of course the Government had to follow the kind of sentiment of the public but the actual war, Ukraine and so close to him and remember. Finland has over 1000 kilometre long border with Russia and Ukraine actually galvanised public opinion sand at and the public sought after. I'm really safe. We've got very good defence voted. We have been safe. Until



Expansion of DTSS welcomed in Waterford

KATIE GLAVIN

New measures are to provide extended dental health care for medical card holders in Waterford.

News of the expansion was welcomed by Minister for Mental Health and Older People, Mary Butler TD who said the significant expansion of services will assist Waterford's medical card patients in accessing an increased level of dental care.


"Approval has been given for increases in the fees payable to contracted dentists for a number of items, including examinations, fillings and the reintroduction of cleaning (Scale and Polish) for medical card patients," Minister Butler said.

According to the minister, the proposals are

designed to address not only issues around services for medical card patients in Waterford and throughout the country, but also the concerns expressed by dentists about the viability of the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS).

"I am particularly encouraged by the reintroduction of the Scale and Polish to this scheme. Professional dental cleanings are important preventative procedures in maintaining one's oral health in the longer term. It is really positive news that such services will be more readily available to medical card holders in Waterford as a result of this expansion of services.

"Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD, has also committed to a root-and-branch review of the Dental Treatment Service Scheme to align the Scheme with the National Oral Health Policy," Minister Butler concluded.

Publication:	rte.ie	Media Cost (€):	3148	
Date:	Thursday, May 12, 2022	Reach	499,800	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	224	

Dentists call for government intervention to help recruitment

The newly elected President of the [Irish Dental Association](#) says the Government must intervene in the recruitment and retention of public dentists before crisis point is reached.

Dr Caroline Robins is also calling for urgent reform of the medical card scheme which she says is no longer fit for purpose.

She was speaking in advance of the association's AGM which opens in Galway later today.

The [Irish Dental Association](#) says clinical practices are overwhelmed with soaring patient numbers and recruitment of associate dentists, hygienists and nurses is at an all time low.

Dr Robins says the two dental schools in University College Cork and Trinity College Dublin do not produce an adequate number of dentists to meet demand.

Of the 200 annual graduates, approximately 70 remain in the workforce.

The association is also calling for a radical overhaul of the medical card scheme, which has been described as a two-tier system that is unethical and limits what materials can be used while treating medical card patients.

It is estimated that less than 700 dentists remain on the scheme.

Health Minister Stephen Donnelly recently allocated an additional €10 million to the scheme with the re-introduction of scale and polish treatments for medical card holders and a raising of fees for contracted dentists.

Publication:	redfm.ie	Media Cost (€):	37	
Date:	Thursday, May 12, 2022	Reach	8,840	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	171	

Dentists call for sweeping reforms

Last updated on May 12th, 2022 Dentists say they need the government to introduce sweeping reforms in dentistry before they reach “crisis point”.

The [Irish Dental Association](#) wants the current medical card scheme replaced with one that’s modern and fit-for-purpose, to stop dentists withdrawing from the scheme.

The representative body also claims recruitment and retention of dentists is at an all time low, with only 35% of dental graduates remaining practicing in Ireland.


The Association will hold its AGM in Galway today.

Chief Executive, Fintan Hourihan, says the medical scheme simply isn’t working.

“Dentists have found that the restrictions in terms of how they provide care, which are related to keeping a tab on the spend, means that they can’t afford to continue with the scheme.

“So what that means is that patients are finding it more and more difficult to find a dentist and what we’re saying is that an entirely new scheme is required.”

Tagged as

Publication:	independent.ie/regionals/corkman	Media Cost (€):	21	
Date:	Friday, May 6, 2022	Reach	4,080	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	192	

Thirty-five per cent drop in number of north Cork dentists taking part in medical card scheme

Call for radical overhaul of scheme as just 30 dentists now cover the entire north Cork area

Figures shown the number of dentists in the North Cork area operating the scheme has dropped by 35% since 2017.

FIGURES obtained by the [Irish Dental Association](#) (IDA) from the HSE have shown a dramatic decrease in the number of Cork dentists operating the medical card scheme over the past five-years – promoting a call for a radical overhaul of the scheme.

The figures shown that there are now just 257 dentists in Cork contracted to the scheme, down from 317 in 2017, with the number in North Cork dropping by a staggering 35% over the period.

This means there are now just 30 dentists covering the North Cork area, which includes Millstreet, Kanturk, Charleville, Mallow, Mitchelstown and Fermoy, down from 46 in 2017.

The medical card scheme, or Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS), is the HSE-contracted service that was first developed in 1994 and provides access to dental care to medical card holders.

Dental medical card scheme in need of a radical overhaul

BILL BROWNE

FIGURES obtained by the Irish Dental Association (IDA) from the HSE have shown a dramatic decrease in the number of Cork dentists operating the medical card scheme over the past five-years – promoting a call for a radical overhaul of the scheme.

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The medical card scheme, or Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS), is the HSE-contracted service that was first developed in 1994 and provides access to dental care to medical card holders.

Reimbursement levels to dentists were reduced following the financial crisis of 2008 and treatments available to medical card holders suspended or available in emergency cases only.

This has not changed in the 13 years since, and dentists have become increasingly critical and frustrated by a scheme that they say is not reflective of modern dental practice, does not have the patient's best interests at heart and is completely unfit for purpose.

Cork dentist, Dr Mairead Browne, said the IDA believes



that “modernisation and not modification” of the dental scheme for medical card patients is now needed to ensure their oral healthcare needs are met.

“Dentists want an entirely new scheme that reflects modern dental practice and care, one that allows vulnerable groups to access routine dental care in their community,” said Dr Browne.

She said that dentists “cannot in all good conscience” operate a scheme they say limits their ability to provide preventative treatment and the use of modern material and techniques.

“As such, dentists are leaving the scheme in their droves and medical card patients are finding it more and more difficult to access care in their own communities,” said Dr Browne. “

The HSE has a responsibility to ensure medical card patients can access adequate dental care, as is their duty under the Health Act. Dentists believe that the HSE has wilfully allowed the scheme fall into a state of crisis and unless meaningful reform comes soon, dentists will continue to leave, and patients will continue to suffer,” she added.



North Cork hit hardest in medical card dentist shortage

MARIAN ROCHE

There are now just 30 dentists left in North Cork participating in the medical card scheme, a reduction of another five dentists on the figure reported by the HSE a month ago. This brings the figure from a high of 46 in 2017 down to 30 currently, a 35% drop.

The reduction in participating dentists in North Cork is the highest county-wide, with a drop of between 10% and 26% in other areas, with no reduction experienced in West Cork. Through the whole of Cork, one in five dentists have left the medical card scheme. The medical card scheme, or Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS), is the HSE-contracted service that was first developed in 1994, and provides access to dental care for medical card holders.

The Irish Dental Association (IDA) are calling for a complete overhaul of the scheme, with one Cork dentist Dr Mairead Browne saying, "We have never under-

stood the rationale behind a scheme that restricts the number of preventative treatments allowed, such as fillings to save a tooth, while permitting an unlimited number of extractions."

Dr Browne continued to say that as a profession, there are 'serious moral and ethical reservations' about providing such a restrictive scheme to patients despite dental medicine having advanced significantly since the scheme was introduced

in 1994.

CALL FOR ENGAGEMENT

In a 2018 report, the association reported that oral diseases are among the most common diseases in the world, yet receive scant attention despite it being a 'human right'.

"Oral health has been shown to contribute positively to physical, mental and social well-being and enjoyment of life's possibilities, unhindered by pain, discomfort and embarrassment. Oral health is a human right," said the association.

The Irish Dental Association (IDA) recently published an independent-

ly commissioned research paper outlining an alternative proposal to the medical card scheme, and say they are continuing to call on the government to engage with the IDA to find a solution before the medical card

scheme collapses. They are calling for a change in the way the scheme is operated entirely, and not just an upgrade.

"The IDA have called for modernisation, not modification, of the dental

scheme for medical card patients," said Dr Browne. "It is what is required to ensure 1.5 million adults are adequately treated for their oral healthcare needs. Dentists want an entirely new scheme that reflects


modern dental practice and care, one that allows vulnerable groups to access routine dental care in their community. The HSE has

a responsibility to ensure medical card patients can access adequate dental care, as is their duty under the Health Act. Dentists believe that the HSE has wilfully allowed the scheme fall into a state of crisis and unless meaningful reform comes soon, dentists will continue to leave, and patients will continue to suffer."

According to the IDA, reimbursement levels to dentists under the medical card scheme were reduced following the financial crisis of 2008, and treatments available to medical card holders suspended or available in emergency cases only. In the 13 years since, this has not changed and the association says that dentists have become increasingly critical and frustrated by a scheme that they say is: "not reflective of modern dental practice, does not have the patient's best interests at heart, and is completely unfit for purpose."



The HSE Dental Clinic in Mitchelstown used to provide services to medical card holders. It will not be reopening following its closure during Covid-19, and the HSE have confirmed there are just 30 dentists in North Cork who remain on the medical card scheme. (Pic: Marian Roche)

Publication:	independent.ie/regionals/corkman	Media Cost (€):	38	
Date:	Wednesday, May 4, 2022	Reach	4,080	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	317	

Dental medical card scheme in need of a radical overhaul

Figures shown the number of dentists in the North Cork area operating the scheme has dropped by 35% since 2017.

FIGURES obtained by the [Irish Dental Association](#) (IDA) from the HSE have shown a dramatic decrease in the number of Cork dentists operating the medical card scheme over the past five-years – promoting a call for a radical overhaul of the scheme.

The figures shown that there are now just 257 dentists in Cork contracted to the scheme, down from 317 in 2017, with the number in North Cork dropping by a staggering 35% over the period.

This means there are now just 30 dentists covering the North Cork area, which includes Millstreet, Kanturk, Charleville, Mallow, Mitchelstown and Fermoy, down from 46 in 2017.

The medical card scheme, or Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS), is the HSE-contracted service that was first developed in 1994 and provides access to dental care to medical card holders.

Cork's essential reads in local news and sport, straight to your inbox every week

Reimbursement levels to dentists were reduced following the financial crisis of 2008 and treatments available to medical card holders suspended or available in emergency cases only.

This has not changed in the 13 years since, and dentists have become increasingly critical and frustrated by a scheme that they say is not reflective of modern dental practice, does not have the patient's best interests at heart and is completely unfit for purpose.


Cork dentist, Dr Mairead Browne, said the IDA believes that "modernisation and not modification" of the dental scheme for medical card patients is now needed to ensure their [Oral Healthcare](#) needs are met.

"Dentists want an entirely new scheme that reflects modern dental practice and care, one that allows vulnerable groups to access routine dental care in their community," said Dr Browne.

Publication:	C103	Media Cost (€):	335	
Date:	Wednesday, May 4, 2022	Reach	75,000	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	10	

C103 @ 04-May-2022 10:40 - (Irish)

Yeah I mean that is another issue that another strand to the future and we have an issue in the public dental service, which has been underfunded under-resourced for a number of years now we have recruitment levels in public and 3 are severely low. I'm not sure you have to do without it. But the school of dental screening seems Yeah. At the moment the waiting that anybody love children, I mean there at the moment. I believe this figure than 100000 students were eligible and waiting and waiting. That and my public dental colleagues want to provide the treatment, but they have on the funding under ply. There's been a lack of investment and career paths it and we also have the other side where we have a lack of graduate, you know, being trained are a season in Cork and in tracking and we have put a call in labour shorter than every a profit of 10 tribute that Street banking and then guiding us and you know anecdotally as well and the evidence suggesting that less than 40 % of dental graduate I retain the Irish economy. A lot of kicking alternative packed with Asian cosmetic dentistry medicine and we need an expansion of a field. The identical to be able to meet the demands of our patients. You know you're your flagging it now and have been planning it for a number of years are the government engaging with the Irish dental Association to find solutions. I mean, we have been knocking on doors for years that every rightly her daughter Patricia. And you know there are certain negotiations ongoing at the moment but no or smoking what we want sensitive. We are working in our people packed into and we want to and modernisation of the team, not a modification of the current team currently unfit for purpose. We need modernisation that reflect current centre-backs neighbours of to treat every patient individually and give them the adequate and appropriate dental care they need and they deserve it of 2022 when we should not be operating on a 1994 contract on 1994 packed that is totally unfair for patients and it's not absolutely OK listen while, said Murray. Thank you for that and I appreciate you taking time off so you're gonna be a crash. Thanks for joining us. Good morning to that his Doctor Murray Brown, who is a dentist based here in Cork, and actually the Irish dental Association, you know they've broken down the figures of how many dentists have left the medical card scheme and a slight one in 5 have left the cut the medical card scheme here in Cork since at 2017 but when you dig a little deeper into those figures. The most stark figure is there's been a 35 % drop in the number of contract to dentists in North Cork and that covers Millstreet, Kanturk, Charleville, Mallow, Mitchelstown and Fermoy, there are now just 30 dentists, covering the entire North Cork area under the medical card as scheme and in 2017 there had been 46 and would certainly explain to us here on this programme. Why we get the most course in that area from people and a medical card saying, I've got to take and I can't access a dentist, there's no dentist taking on medical-card patients are. There's no dentist available. It is truly shocking. Oh 8.8 one of 3 one Oh 3 jump or taking your calls and text WhatsApp to 0.6 two one of 3 one court today on fee one 3 with young accuser Insurances, Kinsale, now part of McCarthy Insurance Group, they don't just talk the talk. They walk the walk. The MIT .ie I join me Trevor Welch exclusively online at sea, one of 3 got I E Chilean Saturdays as we ramp up the excitement for the day's biggest game we'll bring you pre-match analysis live commentary and in-depth interviews with some legends joining the experience with a now sport for sports extra membership listen every Saturday exclusively online at See won all 3

Publication:	Echolive.ie	Media Cost (€):	182	
Date:	Tuesday, May 3, 2022	Reach	10,880	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	579	

Dentists call for ‘modernisation’ of medical card scheme as Cork sees almost 20% decrease in those operating scheme

According to the [Irish Dental Association](#) (IDA), figures obtained from the HSE show the number of dentists in Cork operating the medical card scheme stands at 257 – down from 317 in 2017.

The [Irish Dental Association](#) (IDA) has called for a complete modernisation of the dental scheme for medical card patients as dentists in Cork and across the country “are leaving the scheme in their droves”.

According to the association, figures obtained from the HSE show the number of dentists in Cork operating the medical card scheme stands at 257 – down from 317 in 2017.

This marks an almost 20% decrease in contracted dentists over the period.

The association says this figure stretches to 26% in Cork South Lee, covering areas like the Southern half of Cork city, Ballincollig and Carrigaline.

In Cork North Lee, which includes the Northern half of Cork city, Glanmire, Carrigtwohill, Midleton, Youghal and Macroom, there has been a 10% drop in contracted dentists whilst in North Cork, covering areas such as Millstreet, Kanturk, Charleville, Mallow, Mitchelstown and Fermoy, there has been a 35% drop in contracted dentists.

The medical card scheme, or Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS), is the HSE-contracted service that was first developed in 1994 and provides access to dental care to medical card holders.

Reimbursement levels to dentists were reduced following the financial crisis of 2008 and treatments available to medical card holders suspended or available in emergency cases only.

The IDA says this has remained unchanged in the years since, and dentists have become increasingly critical and frustrated by a scheme that they say is not reflective of modern dental practice, does not have the patient’s best interests at heart, and is completely unfit for purpose.

Dentists want “entirely new scheme”

Cork dentist, Dr Mairead Browne said the IDA believe “modernisation, not modification” of the scheme is what is required to ensure medical card holders are adequately treated for their [Oral Healthcare](#) needs.

“Dentists want an entirely new scheme that reflects modern dental practice and care, one that allows vulnerable groups to access routine dental care in their community.

“We have never understood the rationale behind a scheme that restricts the number of preventative treatments allowed, such as fillings to save a tooth, while permitting an unlimited number of extractions.

“As a profession, we have serious moral and ethical reservations about providing such restrictive treatment to patients, despite dental medicine having advanced significantly in the years since the medical card scheme was introduced, and further since it was subjected to such brutal cuts and cutbacks in 2010.

“We cannot in good conscience operate a scheme which limits our ability to provide preventative treatments to save a tooth and limits our use of modern materials and techniques.

“As such, dentists around the country – including here in Cork – are leaving the scheme in their droves and medical card patients are finding it more and more difficult to access care in their own communities,” she continued.

Dr Browne also said the sector is facing a “recruitment and resourcing crisis” and called for “proper investment” into training dentists, dental nurses and hygienists.

The IDA recently published an independently commissioned research paper outlining an alternative proposal to the medical card scheme and continues to call on the Government to engage with it to find a sustainable solution “before the scheme reaches total collapse”.

Publication:	The Sun (ROI)	Media Cost (€):	7,516	
Date:	Thursday, April 28, 2022	Reach	52,126	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	542	

I had paid for a Hollywood smile, but I was left in absolute agony

AN Irish woman who wanted a Hollywood smile has been left in "excruciating pain" after a clinic in Turkey botched her dental treatment.

Amanda Turner, 34, from Belfast, flew to Istanbul earlier this month to get dental crowns and root canal surgery, paying €3,628.

All seemed well when she checked into the clinic but on the last day of her treatment, Amanda realised something was wrong.

Instead of crowns, the clinic cut corners and put in several strips of false teeth instead despite Amanda being left in agony.

The false teeth, known as bridges, were fitten incorrectly, and now the mum-of-two is in agony and facing massive debt to have the work corrected.

She said: "I honestly cannot believe this has happened to me.

"I thought I'm going to get this work done, and it's going to make such a difference and my teeth won't be sore any more.

"Now it's a million times worse. My own dentist said he has to refer me to medical dentists and it will cost me €21,000 to fix."

Amanda decided to fly abroad after her teeth became damaged during her recent pregnancy.

She chose a dental firm in Istanbul that boasts tens of thousands of followers on social media.

She took out a loan to pay for treatment which she believed would include root canal surgery and dental crowns.

On arrival, Amanda paid up front in cash and was given a receipt for 28 crowns, which also boasted a 20-year warranty.

That same day, dentists filed Amanda's teeth down to the root, and sent her back to her hotel. She was in severe pain and later learned they should've given her 'temps' to protect her natural teeth before leaving the clinic.

Three days later, she returned for her 28 crowns.

But when she arrived, the team had prepared six bridges, used to span the space where teeth are missing.

She told The Irish Sun: "It was so sore, the girl had a camera down my throat taking pictures, saying 'this will be perfect'. 'This isn't what I paid for' "I said 'you're not doing what I asked. This isn't what I paid for'. I said 'you are giving me a cheaper option than what I paid for'."

Since the procedure, Amanda has not been able to eat properly as food aggravates the nerves of her mouth, where the bridges have not been fitted correctly.

Amanda is now warning others of the dangers of getting your teeth done abroad.

She explained: "If I can help one person think twice, and avoid the bad choices that I made, then I will be happy.


"I cannot blame anyone else but myself. I made this choice and I have to suffer the consequences, I'm just glad I'm home, safe, with my family again."

Last month Louth man Tony Rogers died suddenly while having dental treatment in Turkey.

Cabbie Tony, 66, flew to Istanbul for an emergency procedure and passed away after he received anaesthetic in the dentist's chair.

Last month the [Irish Dental Association](#) warned of the dangers of having treatment abroad.

Caption: DIED IN CHAIR ... Tony

Publication:	independent.ie	Media Cost (€):	10195	
Date:	Friday, April 22, 2022	Reach	809,200	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	417	

Measures to expand access to dental scheme

New measures have been approved to expand a dental scheme for medical card holders.

Health Minister and Wicklow TD Stephen Donnelly approved proposals to provide expanded dental health care for medical card holders in the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS).

He has also confirmed his commitment to a review of the scheme to ensure its future viability.

Major concerns had been raised about access to the scheme for medical card holders in Wicklow due to a sharp decline in the number of dentists participating since 2016

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Minister Donnelly said: "I have committed to a root-and-branch review of the DTSS to align the scheme with the National Oral Health Policy. Pending that review, my immediate priority has been to address issues facing medical card patients in accessing treatment.

"In that respect, I have given approval for increases in the fees payable to contracted dentists for a number of items, including examinations and fillings, and I have also approved the reintroduction of cleaning (Scale and Polish) for medical card patients.

"These proposals are designed to address not only issues around services for medical card patients, but also the concerns expressed by dentists about the viability of the DTSS."

The Department of Health said these changes represent a substantial additional investment in the scheme. It also said that the move to re-introduce Scale and Polish is a first step to aligning the DTSS more closely with the other State scheme, the Dental Treatment Benefits Scheme (the PRSI scheme), in which Scale and Polish is provided.

Minister Donnelly said: "I hope that as a result of these changes, we will see an increase in the number of dentists offering treatment to medical card patients."

Wicklow Green Party TD Steven Matthews said he has received confirmation from the Health Minister that a review of the DTSS Contract will start in the coming weeks.

"I look forward to working with the HSE to ensure the best possible outcome for all dental patients," Deputy Matthews said.

Health data recently released to Sinn Féin showed that 72 per cent of dentists have withdrawn from the scheme in the community healthcare area for east Wicklow while 28 per cent of dentists have withdrawn from the DTSS in the west Wicklow-Kildare area since 2016.

Caption:

Expand Close



Just 35 dentists left in North Cork on medical card scheme

MARIAN ROCHE

Throughout North Cork in the last year, another three dentists have left the scheme providing free dental care to medical card holders, leaving just 35 dentists in the region providing care under the Dental Treatment Service Scheme.

The CSO report that in 2018, nearly one third (32.4%) of the population had a medical card. HSE data gives the population of North Cork as 92,726, so a rough estimate would say that just under 30,000 people in North Cork hold medical cards. That's one dentist per 848 medical-card holders in the region.

To compound matters, the HSE state that the majority of the remaining 35 dentists are not accepting new patients at this time, but will however, continue to treat existing patients.

:: TO PAGE 16

Just 35 dentists left in North Cork on medical card scheme


>> *from front*

The HSE point out that the issue is one that is being encountered nationally, and is not unique to Cork. The health service went on to say that, due to wide reporting in the media, the demand for care has increased on the dentists who do continue to operate on the medical card scheme.

DENTAL SCREENING FOR CHILDREN

HSE Dental Clinics ~~provide services~~ for children from birth to 15 years. This service is accessed through screening appointments in the child's primary school. However, the programme was suspended for a period of months in both 2020 and 2021 as staff were redeployed to cover needs arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. They confirmed that in North Cork the school screening programme is about 18 months behind schedule. Usually, children who have the screening are referred, if necessary, to a HSE Dental Clinic. The clinic in Mitchelstown closed in March 2020, and the HSE confirmed that it will not be reopened.

Furthermore, the dental surgery primary care waiting list for general anaesthetic, which covers all of Cork County, is currently being validated. The estimated number of North Cork children on this waiting list is currently between 80-100.

Publication:	radiokerry.ie	Media Cost (€):	23	
Date:	Friday, April 15, 2022	Reach	3,196	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	258	

Irish Dental Association warns of dentist shortage in Kerry

The chief executive of the **Irish Dental Association** believes new measures to expand dental health care will only pause the exodus of dentists who are leaving the scheme to treat medical card holders.

The Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly has approved new measures to carry out a root-and-branch review of the dental treatment services scheme for medical card holders.

Earlier this year, figures revealed that 52% of Kerry dentists had left the scheme.

Under the dental treatment services scheme, the State pays a fee to dentists for treating medical card holders.

Many dentists have left the scheme because they say it's not fit for purpose and because of costs.

Chief executive of the **Irish Dental Association** Fintan Hourihan says while he doesn't think the review will reverse the number of Kerry dentists exiting the dental treatment services , this trend may be paused until the review is carried out.

In recent months, a significant number of private general dental practitioners resigned from the scheme, and dentists were only seeing existing medical card patients at their clinics.

Fintan Hourihan says the scheme is so flawed that it's important it's replaced with a new model.

He says patients are waiting longer to get an appointment with a dentist due to staff shortages.

Mr Hourihan believes a longer-term plan should include a workforce review as they are relying on dentists from overseas.

Fintan Hourihan outlines the shortage of dentists in rural areas including Kerry.



Expanded dental care services for medical card holders announced

SHAUNA BOWERS

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly has approved new measures to expand the provision of dental healthcare for medical card holders.

He has also confirmed his commitment to a review of the dental treatment services scheme (DTSS), to ensure its future viability.

The scheme provides dental care, free to medical card holders aged 16 and over. These services are provided by independent dental practitioners who have a contract with the HSE.

However, the number of dentists registered to provide treatments under the scheme has been in decline, something that accelerated during the pandemic. Among the measures approved by the Minister is an increase in the fees payable to con-

tracted dentists for a number of items, including exams and fillings, and the reintroduction of cleaning to the scheme for medical card patients.

Announcing the changes, Minister Donnelly said there will be a "root-and-branch" review of the scheme to align it with the national oral health policy.

'Medical card patients'

"Pending that review, my immediate priority has been to address issues facing medical card patients in accessing treatment," he said. "These proposals are designed to address not only issues around services for medical card patients, but also the concerns expressed by dentists about the viability of the DTSS."

Mr Donnelly added that he hoped as a result of these chang-

es there will be "an increase in the number of dentists offering treatment to medical card patients".

The Irish Dental Association said while any investment in the scheme is "long overdue", the changes announced will "do little to address the fundamental issues that have forced dentists to withdraw from the scheme en masse". Will Rymer, chairman of the association's general practitioner committee, said the scheme is "outdated and unfit for purpose".

"By increasing the number of treatments available as per the Minister's proposal, the Government is unknowingly heaping further burden on an ever decreasing pool of exhausted practitioners and will only serve to further congest dental practices that remain within the scheme," he said.

Publication: Irish Examiner
Date: Friday, April 15, 2022
Page: 6

Media Cost (€): 304.92
Reach 25,419
Size (Sq. Cm) 21



Extra dental care on medical card

The Government has approved new measures to provide expanded dental health care for medical card holders in the Dental Treatment Services Scheme.

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly said he was committed to a "root-and-branch review" of the scheme, with approval now in place for increases in the fees payable to contracted dentists for a number of items, including examinations and fillings, and the reintroduction of cleaning (scale and polish).

Publication:	irishtimes.com	Media Cost (€):	10445	
Date:	Thursday, April 14, 2022	Reach	710,600	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	468	

Expanded dental care services for medical card holders announced

Irish Dental Association warns changes 'will do little' to address issues

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly has approved new measures to expand the provision of dental health care for medical card holders.

He has also confirmed his commitment to a review of the dental treatment services scheme (DTSS), in order to ensure its future viability.

The scheme provides dental care, free of charge to medical card holders aged 16 and over. These services are provided by independent dental practitioners who have a contract with the HSE.

However, the number of dentists registered to provide treatments under the scheme has been in decline and this decline accelerated during the pandemic.

Among the measures approved by the minister is an increase in the fees payable to contracted dentists for a number of items, including exams and fillings, and the reintroduction of cleaning to the scheme for medical card patients.

Announcing the changes, Minister Donnelly said there will be a "root-and-branch" review of the scheme to align it with the national oral health policy.

"Pending that review, my immediate priority has been to address issues facing medical card patients in accessing treatment," he said.

"These proposals are designed to address not only issues around services for medical card patients, but also the concerns expressed by dentists about the viability of the DTSS."

Mr Donnelly added that he hoped as a result of these changes there will be "an increase in the number of dentists offering treatment to medical card patients".

'Overdue'

Reacting to the announcement, the **Irish Dental Association** said while any investment in the scheme is "long overdue", the changes announced will "do little to address the fundamental issues that have forced dentists to withdraw from the scheme en masse".

Will Rymer, chair of the association's general practitioner committee, said the scheme is "outdated and unfit for purpose".

"By increasing the number of treatments available as per the Minister's proposal, the Government is unknowingly heaping further burden on an ever decreasing pool of exhausted practitioners and will only serve to further congest dental practices that remain within the scheme," he said.

"Modernisation, not modification, of the dental scheme for medical card patients is what is required to ensure 1.5 million adults are adequately treated for their **Oral Healthcare** needs."

Fintan Hourihan, chief executive of the IDA, said a new scheme will only succeed if it attracts sufficient numbers of dentists.

"We urgently need a new scheme for a modern Ireland that is properly funded and allows dentists the clinical autonomy to treat medical card patients as they would private patients," he added.

"The **Irish Dental Association** calls on the Department of Health to commence talks to replace the DTSS scheme as a matter of priority."

Caption:

The number of dentists registered to provide treatments under the scheme has been in decline and this decline accelerated during the pandemic.

Publication:	independent.ie	Media Cost (€):	10195	
Date:	Thursday, April 14, 2022	Reach	809,200	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	430	

Bid to increase the number of dentists offering treatment to medical card patients as fees increased

Fees paid to dentists for examinations and fillings for medical card holders are being increased – and the reintroduction of cleaning has been approved.

Health Minister Stephen Donnelly said today he has approved new measures to provide expanded dental health care for medical card holders in the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS).

The scheme provides dental care free of charge to medical card holders aged 16 and over. These services are provided by independent dental practitioners who have a contract with the HSE.

He has also confirmed his commitment to a review of the scheme to ensure its future viability.

"I have committed to a root-and-branch review of the DTSS to align the Scheme with the National Oral Health Policy.

"Pending that review, my immediate priority has been to address issues facing medical card patients in accessing treatment.

"In that respect, I have given approval for increases in the fees payable to contracted dentists for a number of items, including examinations and fillings, and I have also approved the reintroduction of cleaning (scale and polish) for medical card patients.

"These proposals are designed to address not only issues around services for medical card patients, but also the concerns expressed by dentists about the viability of the DTSS."

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The reintroduction of scale and polish is in keeping with the preventative ethos of the National Oral Health Policy.


It is also a first step to aligning the DTSS more closely with the other State scheme, the Dental Treatment Benefits Scheme (the PRSI scheme), in which Scale and Polish is provided.

"I hope that as a result of these changes, we will see an increase in the number of dentists offering treatment to medical card patients," Mr Donnelly said.

The **Irish Dental Association** has said previously that reimbursement levels to dentists were reduced following the financial crisis of 2008 and treatments available to medical card holders suspended or available in emergency cases only.

Its figures showed that there is currently just one dentist per 2,000 medical card patients and in parts of the country, there was just one dentist covering an entire town or region.

Between 2015 and 2020, there was a drop of 31pc in dentists holding DTSS contracts.

Publication:	independent.ie	Media Cost (€):	10195	
Date:	Tuesday, April 12, 2022	Reach	809,200	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	410	

Number of dentists operating under medical card scheme falls below 40 percent

Figures from the [Irish Dental Association](#) have revealed the number of dentists in Louth operating under the medical card scheme has fallen by 40 percent since 2017.

L. about TD, Ged Nash said this figure was “shocking” and “highlights there has been a drastic decline in the availability of dental care in county Louth.”

“Medical card patients are bearing the brunt of this crisis, with just 21 dentists now operating the medical card scheme in Louth.

“I have been inundated with calls and visits from concerned constituents in recent months who have been unable to secure dental care because they have a medical card.

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“One person described how they called practically every dentist in Drogheda, Dundalk and Navan amounting to almost 50 phone calls, but none are in a position to take on new medical card holders.”

Having met with the Dental Association and local dentists to bear witness to their concerns, Nash said, “It is clear they are completely stretched, under-resourced and simply unable to meet the needs of patients under the existing and outdated dental treatment services scheme.

“I have also repeatedly raised the concerns of constituents and conscientious local dentists who want to provide twenty first century dental care to those with medical cards with the Minister for Health. Yet the situation continues to deteriorate day by day, with dental patients and practitioners left in the lurch as the stalemate on talks over a new scheme is allowed to drag on.

“This will undoubtedly have lasting implications as the dental needs of too many are currently going unmet.


“Many of those I represented have been forced to scrape together money for expensive treatments at a time when household finances are already under severe pressure as the cost of living soars.

“We should not forget that under the Health Act, the Government, Minister for Health and HSE have a legal duty to ensure that medical card patients can access adequate dental care. They have abjectly failed in this duty.

“I have once again written to the parties to remind them of their responsibilities, and to demand urgent interim measures be put in place to provide timely treatment for dental patients on medical cards in Louth.

Caption:

“Medical card patients are bearing the brunt of this crisis, with just 21 dentists now operating the medical card scheme in Louth.”

Publication:	droghedalife.com	Media Cost (€):	28	
Date:	Sunday, April 10, 2022	Reach	2,108	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	479	

Nash slams government's continued failure to act on dental care crisis

Just 21 dentists operating the medical card scheme in County Louth

The lack of urgency brought to bear on the serious dental crisis being experienced by medical card holders is inexcusable. For people in need of urgent attention it has resulted in needless suffering.

For those missing regular check-ups, it is laying the foundations for problems in the future.

Figures from the [Irish Dental Association](#) (IDA) reveal that the number of dentists in Louth operating the medical card scheme has fallen by 40% since 2017.

Responding to these figures local Labour TD Ged Nash has demanded that the Minister and the HSE bring in interim measures to support medical card patients as stalemate on negotiations for a new contract drag on.

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"These shocking figures from the dentists' group once again highlight that there has been a drastic decline in the availability of dental care in Co. Louth" Deputy Nash said.

"Medical card patients are bearing the brunt of this crisis, with just 21 dentists now operating the medical card scheme in County Louth.

"I have been inundated with calls and visits from concerned constituents in recent months who have been unable to secure dental care because they have a medical card.

"One person described how they called practically every dentist in Drogheda, Dundalk and Navan amounting to almost 50 phone calls, but none are in a position to take on new medical card holders.

"I recently met with the Dental Association and local dentists to hear their concerns. It is clear they are completely stretched, under-resourced and simply unable to meet the needs of patients under the existing and outdated dental treatment services scheme.

"I have also repeatedly raised the concerns of constituents and conscientious local dentists who want to provide twenty first century dental care to those with medical cards with the Minister for Health. Yet the situation continues to deteriorate day by day, with dental patients and practitioners left in the lurch as the stalemate on talks over a new scheme is allowed drag on.

"This will undoubtedly have lasting implications as the dental needs of too many are currently going unmet.

"Many of those I represented have been forced to scrape together money for expensive treatments at a time when household finances are already under severe pressure as the cost of living soars.

"We should not forget that under the Health Act, the Government, Minister for Health and HSE have a legal duty to ensure that medical card patients can access adequate dental care. They have abjectly failed in this duty.

"I have once again written to the parties to remind them of their responsibilities, and to demand urgent interim measures be put in place to provide timely treatment for dental patients on medical cards in Louth."

Publication:	dundalkdemocrat.ie	Media Cost (€):	6	
Date:	Thursday, April 7, 2022	Reach	500	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	450	

Number of dentists providing care to medical card patients in Louth has almost halved in the last 10 years

Jason Newman 07 Apr 2022 12:30 PM Email: jason.newman@dundalkdemocrat.ie

The number of dentists in Louth operating the medical card scheme has fallen by nearly half since 2012 to today, with just 21 dentists contracted to the scheme in 2022, new figures seen by the [Irish Dental Association](#) have revealed

The medical card scheme, or Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS), is the HSE-contracted service that was first developed in 1994 and provides access to dental care to medical card holders.

Reimbursement levels to dentists were reduced following the financial crisis of 2008 and treatments available to medical card holders suspended or available in emergency cases only.

This has not changed in the 13 years since, and dentists have become increasingly critical and frustrated by a scheme that they say is not reflective of modern dental practice, does not have the patient's best interests at heart, and is completely unfit for purpose.

Local Louth dentist, Dr Cormac McNamara, said:

"Dentists want an entirely new scheme that reflects modern dental practice and care, one that allows vulnerable groups to access routine dental care in their community.

"We have never understood the rationale behind a scheme that restricts the number of preventative treatments allowed, such as fillings to save a tooth, while permitting an unlimited number of extractions.

"As a profession, we have serious moral and ethical reservations about providing such restrictive treatment to patients, despite dental medicine having advanced significantly in the years since the medical card scheme was introduced, and further since it was subjected to such brutal cuts and cutbacks in 2010.

"We cannot in good conscience operate a scheme which limits our ability to provide preventative treatments to save a tooth and limits our use of modern materials and techniques.

"As such, dentists around the country – including here in Louth – are leaving the scheme in their droves and medical card patients are finding it more and more difficult to access care in their own communities.

"The HSE has a responsibility to ensure medical card patients can access adequate dental care, as is their duty under the Health Act. Dentists believe that the HSE has wilfully allowed the scheme fall into a state of crisis and unless meaningful reform comes soon, dentists will continue to leave, and patients will continue to suffer."

The [Irish Dental Association](#) (IDA) recently published an independently commissioned research paper outlining an alternative proposal to the medical card scheme and continues to call on the Government to engage with it to find a sustainable solution before the scheme reaches total collapse.



Irishman dies during dental op in Turkey

TAXI FIRM OWNER HAD JUST HAD ANAESTHETIC

AN IRISHMAN described as a "lovely man" died suddenly amid dental treatment in Turkey.

Tony Rogers (66), flew to Istanbul for an emergency procedure on Monday and then died after he received an anaesthetic in the dentist's chair the next morning.

The popular businessman was the owner of one of the biggest taxi companies, Tony's Cabs, in Drogheda, Co Louth.

He travelled over to Turkey on his own to get implants in.

His tragic death has caused great shock and sadness in his hometown where he was a popular figure.

Shock

The Turkish authorities are now expected to hold a full scale inquiry into how he died.

Officials will also conduct a post mortem.

Mr Roger's family and friends were last night desperately trying to find out what exactly happened to him.

He wasn't known to have any underlying health conditions.

Mr Rogers is survived by his heartbroken son and two daughters.

A friend said: "This is a great shock and all very sudden. We are trying to

■ John KIERANS

find out what exactly happened to him. He obviously had a reaction to whatever anaesthetic he was given.

"It is just so sad, he was a lovely man who worked hard and built up his business from nothing. Everyone in Drogheda knew Tony."

Turkey is the top destination for Irish people who jet abroad for dental treatment with Hungary and Croatia in second and third place.

Patients have implants, root canal and crowns installed in Turkey at a tenth of the cost in Ireland.

However, only last week the Irish Dental Association warned of the dangers of having treatment abroad and told people to do their homework about what dentist they go to in another country.

They also revealed how three out of four dentists in Ireland had to deal with problems arising from treatment overseas.

It said: "We need to encourage people travelling abroad to focus on the quality of work – not just the price."

The Department of Foreign Affairs confirmed it was aware of the death of Mr Rogers and is providing consular assistance where possible.



TRAGIC: Tony Rogers

Publication:	irishmirror.ie	Media Cost (€):	1823	
Date:	Wednesday, April 6, 2022	Reach	133,620	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	10	

Irishman dies suddenly while having dental treatment in Turkey

An Irishman has died suddenly while having dental treatment in Turkey.

Tony Rogers, 66, flew to Istanbul for an emergency procedure on Monday and then passed away after he received an anesthetic in the dentist's chair the next morning.

The popular businessman was the owner of one of the biggest taxi companies, Tony's Cabs, in Drogheda, Co Louth.

He travelled over to Turkey on his own to get implants in.

His tragic death has caused great shock and sadness in his hometown where he was an extremely popular figure.

Read more: Meet the 14 dogs 'on death row' in Irish foster home with time running out to save them

The Turkish authorities are now expected to hold a full scale inquiry into what happened.

A post mortem will also be held.

Turkey is the number one destination for Irish people having dental treatment abroad followed by Hungary and Croatia.

Patients have implants, root canal and crowns installed at a tenth of the cost it is in Ireland.

However, only last week the **Irish Dental Association** warned of the dangers of having treatment abroad and told people to be "more discerning" and to do their homework about what dentist they go to in another country.

They also revealed how three out of four dentists in Ireland had to deal with problems arising from treatment people had received overseas.

It said: "The **Irish Dental Association** is concerned about the quality of dental care in other countries and urges people to get consultation at home first.

"We need to encourage people who may be travelling abroad to focus on the quality of work they receive and whether that work is really necessary - not just the price of that work."

The number of Irish people going for treatment abroad had soared in recent weeks since the lifting of Covid restrictions.

Mr Roger's family and friends are now desperately trying to find out what exactly happened to him.

He wasn't known to have any underlying health conditions.

He is survived by his heartbroken son and two daughters.

A friend said: "This is a great shock and all very sudden. We are trying to find out what exactly happened to him. He obviously had a reaction to whatever aesthetic he was given.

"It is just so sad, he was a lovely man who worked hard and built up his business from nothing. Everyone in Drogheda knew Tony."

The Department of Foreign of confirmed it is aware of the case and is providing consular assistance where possible.

It said; " As with all consular cases the Dept can not comment on the details of any specific case."

READ MORE: Dreaming of living in New York? Inside city where most people 'want to leave' as crime, cost and homelessness rise

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HSE says estimated 120 children waiting for tooth extractions

By EIMEAR DODD

AROUND 120 children have been referred for tooth extractions under general anaesthetic in healthcare areas that include Wicklow, the HSE has confirmed.

HSE Community Healthcare East (CHO 6), which includes east Wicklow, confirmed 47 children had been referred for this treatment. The HSE Community Health Organisation for Dublin South-west, Kildare and West Wicklow (CHO 7) said 73 are on the waiting list for tooth extractions under general anaesthetic as of April 1.

Figures released by the HSE to Sinn Féin recorded that 49 children were on a waiting list for extractions under general anaesthetic as of February 17 from CHO 6, which includes east Wicklow.

The same data recorded that 91 children are on a waiting list for extractions under general anaesthetic in CHO 7, which incorporates west Wicklow.

A spokesperson for HSE Community Healthcare East, said: "The HSE Dental Service has a contractual arrangement with a UPMC Kildare Hospital, Clane, Co. Kildare to provide

treatment for children who need extractions under general anaesthetic.

"Referrals of children for extractions under general anaesthetic are managed according to local guidelines under strict criteria.

"There is limited access to appointments at short notice for children that require a general anaesthetic. Where there isn't an immediate need, children may be waiting up to a year for treatment.

"At present 47 children have been referred for this treatment

in Community Healthcare East (which serves Dublin South East, Dublin South and Wicklow), and waiting lists for this service are reviewed and validated on a regular basis."

A spokesperson for HSE CHO 7 said: "as at April 1 the number of Children on Dental GA [general anaesthetic] wait list for DSWKWW [Dublin South-west, Kildare and West Wicklow] is 73.

"This number represents those awaiting extractions only under GA. Wait lists are not held in respect of other cases

as these are referred to Dublin Dental Hospital, Crumlin or Tallaght Hospitals."

Meanwhile, a HSE spokesperson also warned that it is unlikely that the number of dentists signed up to a dental treatment scheme for medical card holders will increase ahead of the agreement of a new dental contract.

16 dentists are signed up to the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS) in CHO 6, which includes east Wicklow, a decline of 57 per cent since 2016.

In CHO 7, there has been a decline of 28 per cent in the DTSS contracts between 2017 and 2021.

Concerns have been expressed that medical card holders in Wicklow could face long delays to obtain dental treatments available under the scheme due to the decline in the number of dentists taking part.

A spokesperson for HSE Community Healthcare East said other factors may play a part in longer waiting times faced by dental patients for appointments.

"Dental patients, both private and medical card holders, are currently experiencing significant waiting times for rou-

tine appointments. The cause of these delays is multi-factorial, including reduced footfall of up to 30 per cent in dental practices due to Covid-19 related restrictions, loss of surgery time due to Covid-19 related staff absences and an increased demand for dental treatment.

A national workforce challenge is also impacting all dental disciplines with many unfilled vacancies.

"There have been significant resignations from the DTSS (Dental Treatment Services Scheme) panel, both locally and nationally in recent years. Community Healthcare East's records indicate that there has been a reduction in dental contractors providing dental services under the DTSS in Wicklow from 37 in August 2016 to 16 in March 2022, which is a decline of almost 57 per cent.

"The number of resignations from the scheme has accelerated since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, the dentists that continue to provide a service under the DTSS are experiencing high demand for appointments.

"The existing DTSS contract was issued in 1994 and negotiations on a replacement contract

between the Department of Health, the HSE and the dental profession are at an early stage. It is unlikely that there will be a meaningful increase in the number of DTSS contractors pending agreement of a new dental contract.

A spokesperson for HSE CHO 7 acknowledged that public dental patients may have to

travel outside their local areas to attend appointments at dentists who are part of DTSS.

They said: "The number of contracts will vary monthly as contractors enter and exit the scheme.


"However, a reduction of approximately 28 per cent of contracts has occurred based on the recorded number of DTSS contracts held in Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow from 2017 to 2021.

"Patients are experiencing delays in accessing treatment due to the withdrawal of private dentists from the DTSS, and increased waiting times for dental appointments following the impact of Covid-19.

"To access care, patients may have to travel from their local communities to access DTSS dentists," the spokesperson added.




Dentist examining a boy's teeth.

Publication:	Newstalk	Media Cost (€):	8000	
Date:	Sunday, April 3, 2022	Reach	375,500	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	10	

Newstalk @ 03-Apr-2022 06:15 - (Irish) Part 1

all we can do so in terms of the cost of producing electricity, there is nothing the ESB or electric guard and can do it can do all kinds of things about changing its pricing so as to change the way people consume it. But in terms of getting general prices down in the short run, nothing ready they can do, and if you force them to do it then basically are saying they should take a lost at and then that seems to be what so so some are suggesting with is. I mean, but these are. These are people Yeah just a Social media and also some of the blathering from opposition in the so-called useful idiot. Well I suppose more I gonna leave you with this last question. A lot of our listeners don't care so much about the politics but they are struggling. Particular home heating oil is the one that catches my eye and in establishing what you pay for it. Yeah, I mean. Have you anything to say to them, you have a slide. You know, there's a sound optimistic air to what you're saying about the transitory nature of it, potentially, but is there anything just for the order listener, listening to the to was driving the car today, whether petrol or diesel car the raid, if they're looking to better for the petrol and diesel is rarely what to say to them that will just give them a slight optimistic slant on this news it's hitting them. Every day I be, I wouldn't be an economist of her of peddling optimist it rules's the disqualified for your perfect, there is very little to offer and the trouble is, it's little worse than that, the kind of things that are done to keep the useful idiots quiet will with on the face of it, don't bring down the price of petrol or bring down the price of gas but inevitably, but they still needed somebody else somewhere is being asked to pay for a well that's interesting that theory and I'm glad you mentioned useful leaders but did not name any of them by name and our lawyers are happy about that too. Economist Moore McDowell, thank you very much for joining us enjoy the rest of Saturday really appreciate you talking to us today on Newstalk. Ok, the best of Newstalk get more best bits with a listen back feature on the Newstalk powered by goal out we do an industry review as the regular listeners will know each week. And it's that time of the show and we do it for nears and teeth whitening are becoming the new breast augmentation one of an in the dentist industry insiders. We contacted this week told us. Although they used slightly less elegant language dances across Ireland are seeing a significant increase in the demand for their services after the pandemic, a trend that many practitioners are noticing is the so-called zoom effect. Yes, people want to look as well as possible on a Zoom including their teeth, the dentist industry generally is booming. It's hard to get services. There is a shortage of graduates coming into the industry as well and a lot of services are not necessarily available at a reasonable price for patients and it is a major, major problem and we will discuss it today with 3 people who have a keen eye on this whole area I have Caroline Robbins, who is chair of the GP committee of the [Irish](#) dental Association and she is a dentist, a Kiwi dental in Carlow. We have Lisa Craven, who is a dentist and founder of spotlight care in Galway and we have Keith Redmond, who was the owner of Redland dental care here in Dublin city, are all very welcome to the show. I really appreciate you coming along. Let's go first navy to Caroline and Caroline is your work is a dense for a good while. What kind of pressures are you noticing. At the moment in the industry. Thanks very much for having me process at the moment. We just don't have enough dentist in the country to serve the needs out there. There is a chronic shortages of dentists available. I'm lucky enough to have two wonderful down to smoking with me and I'm very extremely lucky to have a new graduate from Cork who graduated last year from class of 54 that year. There are 28 dentist working in the country. The dental schools actually they obviously have an educational part of it, but they also have. They have to balance the books and they get a lot of very now fee-paying students so there will be enough Canadians and Malaysia and Singapore and students, and of the class of last year. Not one single Canadians day in the country. They've all gone home. Yeah, I want to focus on this particular as a personal test me on this. My dentist whose name shall remain him anonymous on the show, but I'm sure if he is listening. He hear me, it's very hard to get a clean, it's very hard to get a dental hygienist can you just give our listeners an idea that's why a lot People go for care and maintenance. More than a big procedure. Can you give us an idea of how few people are coming into that area every year through the educational system again. Absolutely, I mean anyone who attends my surgery now is my cigarette single biggest mentor is if there's nothing else it you do you get a good

Publication:	Newstalk	Media Cost (€):	7773	
Date:	Sunday, April 3, 2022	Reach	375,500	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	948	

Newstalk @ 03-Apr-2022 06:15 - (Irish) Part 2

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And it's that time of the show and we do it for nears and teeth whitening are becoming the new breast augmentation one of an in the dentist industry insiders. We contacted this week told us. Although they used slightly less elegant language dances across Ireland are seeing a significant increase in the demand for their services after the pandemic, a trend that many practitioners are noticing is the so-called zoom effect. Yes, people want to look as well as possible on a Zoom including their teeth, the dentist industry generally is booming. It's hard to get services. There is a shortage of graduates coming into the industry as well and a lot of services are not necessarily available at a reasonable price for patients and it is a major, major problem and we will discuss it today with 3 people who have a keen eye on this whole area I have Caroline Robbins, who is chair of the GP committee of the Irish dental Association and she is a dentist, a Kiwi dental in Carlow. We have Lisa Craven, who is a dentist and founder of spotlight care in Galway and we have Keith Redmond, who was the owner of Redland dental care here in Dublin city, are all very welcome to the show. I really appreciate you coming along. Let's go first navy to Caroline and Caroline is your work is a dense for a good while. What kind of pressures are you noticing. At the moment in the industry. Thanks very much for having me process at the moment. We just don't have enough dentist in the country to serve the needs out there. There is a chronic shortages of dentists available. I'm lucky enough to have two wonderful down to smoking with me and I'm very extremely lucky to have a new graduate from Cork who graduated last year from class of 54 that year. There are 28 dentist working in the country. The dental schools actually they obviously have an educational part of it, but they also have. They have to balance the books and they get a lot of very now fee-paying students so there will be enough Canadians and Malaysia and Singapore and students, and of the class of last year. Not one single Canadians day in the country. They've all gone home. Yeah, I want to focus on this particular as a personal test me on this. My dentist whose name shall remain him anonymous on the show, but I'm sure if he is listening. He hear me, it's very hard to get a clean, it's very hard to get a dental hygienist can you just give our listeners an idea that's why a lot People go for care and maintenance. More than a big procedure. Can you give us an idea of how few people are coming into that area every year through the educational system again. Absolutely, I mean anyone who attends my surgery now is my cigarette single biggest mentor is if there's nothing else it you do you get a good

Publication:	independent.ie	Media Cost (€):	8496	
Date:	Thursday, March 31, 2022	Reach	809,200	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	365	

Just three dentists left in treatment services scheme in County Sligo

The public Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS) which allows private dentists to provide basic dental services to adult medical card holders is on the verge of collapse in the Sligo-Leitrim area, a Sligo councillor stated, following a report he received at the most recent meeting of the Regional Health Forum West.

Cllr Declan Bree had submitted a formal question to HSE officials seeking information on the number of dentists participating in the Scheme in Sligo-Leitrim.

In response he was told there are only three dentists in Co. Sligo currently treating patients under the public Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS) with one dentist in Co. Leitrim.

"These figures are shocking and clearly indicate that the public dental service is in a state of crisis." said Cllr Bree.

"There are over 30,000 people with Medical Cards in Sligo-Leitrim who are eligible for the service.

"How in the name of goodness can just four dentists provide dental care for so many people?

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"Figures available show that Government spending on the Dental Treatment Services Scheme nationally decreased by 30% in the period 2017 to 2020.

"Hundreds of dentists have left the Scheme in recent years. This has clearly led to an unprecedented crisis in public dentistry.

"Medical Card patients now face delays while seeking treatment; increased travel time while seeking that treatment; and possible reliance on the already underfunded public dental service.

"The ongoing failure of Government to address this crisis is showing contempt for medical card holders.

"It also shows scant regard or understanding of the impact of the crisis on vulnerable patients who are unable to afford access to vital dental care

"The Health Act sets out an obligation for Government to provide adequate medical care for Medical Card holders. In this context the Government and the Minister for Health need to provide the necessary resources and engage with the [Irish Dental Association](#) as a matter of urgency." said Cllr Bree.

Caption:

Cllr Declan Bree



Boy (11) endures agonising wait for HSE dental treatment

By EILISH O'REGAN

A young boy who is in serious pain due to a dental condition he was born with which affects his back teeth is desperately waiting for the go-ahead to have them removed.

The condition suffered by Iosa Ghani (11) from Roundwood, Co Wicklow, who has enamel hypoplasia in his back teeth, leaves him with difficulty eating and sleeping and has caused him to miss school many times.

His worried mother Hazel said she has taken him for several check-ups to the HSE clinic in the area but he has ended up with no treatment so far despite the urgency.

The procedure calls for an anaesthetic to be administered in hospital but the boy has encountered delays and confusion over blood tests.

Two dentists have signed off on the procedure but despite the impact on her son's life and education it has still not happened despite Hazel being told in 2018 the teeth need to be removed. "He woke up the other day and he was in agony," she said.

The treatment should be provided free through the HSE under the schools' dental programme.

"He finds it difficult to eat and sleep. He has lost so many



Iosa Ghani from Roundwood.

school days," she said. "He has pain in his teeth and has been very good with it. It is very painful but he has developed a high tolerance."

The family has since sought services privately through Wicklow dentist James Turner in a bid to relieve some of the pain Iosa is suffering.

Mr Turner, who practises in Rathdrum, said: "His mother

is at her wits' end. We restored the teeth as much as we could and she said it has brought him relief."

However, he added the boy's "teeth are unsalvageable without spending a lot of money" and it would involve root canal treatment on four teeth. The alternative is to have them extracted.

"We see children all the time

who are going through the school system and are not being screened in second, fourth and sixth classes as they should through the HSE programme."

It means many children are losing out on preventive care.

"Also the criteria for getting a child on an orthodontic waiting list is very strict and a lot of children miss out. The waiting list delays are for years."

Recent figures obtained by David Cullinane, Sinn Féin's spokesman on health, shows that nearly 2,030 children are waiting for dental surgery under general anaesthetic nationally.

A spokeswoman for the HSE community healthcare east area covering Wicklow, Dublin south-east and Dublin south, said the Covid-19 emergency had a significant impact on the provision of all health services, including dental services and some delays and backlogs remain as a result.

In Iosa's community healthcare area, 46 children in the school dental scheme have been referred to have teeth removed.

"It is likely some of these have already been treated but discharge letters have not been processed yet," the spokeswoman said.

She said there is limited access to appointments at short notice that require a general anaesthetic.



Just three dentists left in scheme

THE public Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS) which allows private dentists to provide basic dental services to adult medical card holders is on the verge of collapse in the Sligo-Leitrim area, a Sligo councillor stated, following a report he received at the most recent meeting of the Regional Health Forum West.

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"The Health Act sets out an obligation for Government to provide adequate medical care for Medical Card holders. In this context the Government and the Minister for Health need to provide the necessary resources and engage with the Irish Dental Association as a matter of urgency," said Cllr Bree.



No dental scheme providers in Drogheda

LOUTH TD Imelda Munster has called on the government to urgently address the “collapse” of the Dental Treatment Services Scheme.

The scheme is intended to provide dental services to medical card holders, but the Sinn Féin TD says public dental services have essentially collapsed.

“There isn’t a single dentist in Drogheda providing care under the DTSS at the moment,” she said. “The scheme has been haemorrhaging dentists for well over a year now. Twenty-one dentists have left the scheme in county Louth alone in the last two years and the situation is replicated right across the state.

Deputy Munster highlighted that there are 100,000 children in the state currently

waiting for dental check ups, between first class check ups and sixth class check ups.

“5000 of these children are in Louth and 6000 are in Meath,” added Deputy Munster.

The Irish Dental Association members had a meeting with the Department and the HSE on March 2, however they are not scheduled to meet again until June.

“Restrictions have been put on treatment, including the removal of scale and polish and other basic treatments. These issues need to be resolved.

“People are suffering because of a lack of basic dental care and it’s frankly disgraceful that this has been allowed to happen and that the government isn’t taking any urgent steps to resolve it.”



Boy (11) endures agonising wait for HSE dental treatment

Elilish O'Regan
HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

A YOUNG boy who is in serious pain due to a dental condition he was born with which affects his back teeth is desperately waiting for the go-ahead to have them removed.

The condition suffered by Iosa Ghani (11) from Roundwood, Co Wicklow, who has enamel hypoplasia in his back teeth, leaves him with difficulty eating and sleeping and has caused him to miss school many times.

His worried mother Hazel said she has taken him for several check-ups to the HSE clinic in the area but he has ended up with no treatment so far despite the urgency.

The procedure calls for an anaesthetic to be administered in hospital but the boy has encountered delays and confusion over blood tests.

Two dentists have signed off on the procedure but despite the impact on her son's life and education it has still not happened despite Hazel being told in 2018 the teeth need to be removed. "He woke up the other day and he was in agony," she said.

The treatment should be provided free through the HSE under the schools' dental programme.

"He finds it difficult to eat and sleep. He has lost so many school days," she said. "He has pain in his teeth and has been very good with it. It is very painful but he has developed a high tolerance."

The family has since sought services privately through Wicklow dentist James Turner in a bid to relieve some of the pain Iosa is suffering.

Mr Turner, who practises in Rathdrum, said: "His mother is at her wits' end. We restored the teeth as much as we could and she said it has brought him relief."

However, he added the boy's "teeth are unsalvageable without spending a lot of money" and it would involve root canal treatment on four teeth. The alternative is to have them extracted.

"We see children all the time who are going through the school system and are not being screened in second, fourth and sixth classes as they should through the HSE programme."

It means many children are losing out on preventive care.

"Also the criteria for getting a child on an orthodontic waiting list is very strict and a lot of children miss out. The waiting list delays are for years."

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"It is likely some of these have already been treated but discharge letters have not been processed yet," the spokeswoman said.

She said there is limited access to appointments at short notice that require a general anaesthetic.



Iosa Ghani has difficulty eating and sleeping

Publication:	droghedalife.com	Media Cost (€):	19	
Date:	Saturday, March 26, 2022	Reach	2,108	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	321	

Lack of action on collapsed dental scheme a disgrace - Munster

Not a single dentist in Drogheda providing care under the DTSS

Local Sinn Féin TD Imelda Munster has repeated her calls for the government to urgently fix the problems in the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS) which is supposed to fund dental services to medical card holders but is failing to do so.

Speaking after a meeting she held with representatives of the [Irish Dental Association](#) in Louth, Deputy Munster said that the public dental services have to all intents and purposes collapsed across the state and the government is showing no urgency in trying to resolve the issue.

"There isn't a single dentist in Drogheda providing care under the DTSS at the moment, and the scheme has been haemorrhaging dentists for well over a year" she said.

"Twenty-one dentists have left the scheme in county Louth alone in the last two years and the situation is replicated right across the state.

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"We also have 100,000 children in this state currently waiting for dental check-ups, between first class check-ups and sixth class check-ups. This is an obscene number. 5,000 of these children are in Louth and 6,000 are in Meath.

"The [Irish Dental Association](#) members who met with me told me that they had a meeting with the Department and the HSE on March the 2 nd, but they are not scheduled to meet again until June. This shows a total lack of urgency on the government's part.

"Restrictions have been put on treatment, including the removal of scale and polish and other basic treatments. These issues need to be resolved.

"People are suffering because of a lack of basic dental care and it's frankly disgraceful that this has been allowed to happen and that the government isn't taking any urgent steps to resolve it."



Dental check backlog for schoolchildren

Sinn Féin TD for Dublin Mid-West, Eoin Ó Broin has called on the Minister for Health to take immediate action to clear the backlog of schoolchildren awaiting dental checks. Figures obtained by Deputy Ó Broin from the HSE show that there are 8,300 students awaiting a dental examination in schools across Inchicore, Ballyfermot, Clondalkin, Lucan and Rathcoole.

Deputy Ó Broin said: "These services are vital. Spotting dental issues early on is pivotal to maintain good long-term health.

"The information I received from the HSE indicated the 8,300 primary school children are awaiting a dental check in schools in Dublin Mid-West.

"In 2019, the Irish Dental Association (IDA) said that increasing numbers of children were only being offered examination and dental care for the first time at sixth class – instead of at first/second, fourth and sixth classes.


"Cutbacks to dental services across the country have been flagged prior to COVID-19, with a backlog amassing before the pandemic.

"While COVID-19 contributed to a major backlog in all areas of our healthcare system, action must now be taken to clear these lists. Particularly with regard to children who are in need of the most basic of dental check-ups"

"My colleague, Sinn Féin Health spokesperson David Cullinane, has raised concerns about the lack of dentists available for public patients.

"There are currently only 660 dentists treating public patients at the moment, which is a major factor in this backlog.

"Minister Donnelly needs to treat this shortfall as the emergency it is and recruit appropriate professionals as a matter of urgency."

Publication:	independent.ie	Media Cost (€):	6797	
Date:	Friday, March 25, 2022	Reach	809,200	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	269	

No dentist in Drogheda providing care under the DTSS

Louth TD Imelda Munster has called on the government to to urgently address the “collapse” of the Dental Treatment Services Scheme.

The scheme is intended to provide dental services to medical card holders, but the Sinn Féin TD says public dental services have essentially collapsed.

“There isn’t a single dentist in Drogheda providing care under the DTSS at the moment,” she said. “The scheme has been haemorrhaging dentists for well over a year now. Twenty-one dentists have left the scheme in county Louth alone in the last two years and the situation is replicated right across the state.

Deputy Munster highlighted that there are 100,000 children in the state currently waiting for dental check ups, between first class check ups and sixth class check ups.

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“5000 of these children are in Louth and 6000 are in Meath,” added Deputy Munster.


The **Irish Dental Association** members had a meeting with the Department and the HSE on March 2, however they are not scheduled to meet again until June.

“Restrictions have been put on treatment, including the removal of scale and polish and other basic treatments. These issues need to be resolved.

“People are suffering because of a lack of basic dental care and it’s frankly disgraceful that this has been allowed to happen and that the government isn’t taking any urgent steps to resolve it.”

Caption:

“People are suffering because of a lack of basic dental care and it’s frankly disgraceful”

Publication:	galwaybayfm.ie	Media Cost (€):	19	
Date:	Friday, March 11, 2022	Reach	9,180	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	97	


Only 10 dentists across Galway accepting new medical card patients

Galway Bay fm newsroom – The Dáil has heard there are now only 10 dentists across Galway accepting new patients under the [Dental Treatment Service Scheme](#).

Raising the matter, Deputy Mairead Farrell said patients with medical cards are facing serious difficulties in getting treatment.

She said there are just 24 dentists participating in the DTSS scheme in Galway – and only 10 are currently accepting new patients.

Speaking in response, Minister Mary Butler acknowledged ongoing difficulties nationwide – but said progress on addressing the situation is being made.

Publication:	connachttribune.ie	Media Cost (€):	24	
Date:	Friday, March 11, 2022	Reach	11,900	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	107	

Only 10 dentists across Galway accepting new medical card patients

<https://galwaybayfm.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ButlerDTSS.mp3> Galway Bay fm newsroom – The Dáil has heard there are now only 10 dentists across Galway accepting new patients under the [Dental Treatment Service Scheme](#).

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Speaking in response, Minister Mary Butler acknowledged ongoing difficulties nationwide – but said progress on addressing the situation is being made.



No dentists available for medical card holders

BY NIAMH MCGOVERN

Disappointment resumes for medical card holders who continue to be left behind in Drogheda, as they are facing a constant battle to find a dentist.

Local Sinn Féin TD, Imelda Munster (*pictured right*) said it is "disgraceful" that there is not one dentist in the town who will accept medical card patients.

Deputy Munster has continued to push the matter in the Dáil with Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform Michael

McGrath, where she called on the government to address the ongoing crisis in public dental services in Louth as a matter of urgency.

Over the last two years, 21 dentists have left the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS), with more expected to follow.

"This leaves only fourteen dentists currently working under the scheme in Co. Louth, and none of them are working in Drogheda," said Deputy Munster

"Adult medical card holders haven't been able to access dental treatment in over a year. This includes people who have serious illnesses including cancer and diabetes, and people who have complex dental needs.

"For well over a year people have been left with no dental care, many of them in pain, while the government has dragged its heels with regards to getting the scheme back up and running effectively.

"On top of this we have 5,000 primary school age children

in Louth who are awaiting routine dental check ups. There are a further 6,000 in Meath. First class check-ups have been done away with due to the shortage of dentists, and there is a significant backlog for sixth



class check ups.

The government have made contact with the Irish Dental Association regarding the matter. "People are entitled to dental care under their medical cards, and it's high time this was made availa-

ble to them."

With eating habits higher and higher consumption of sugary foods, an increase in dental decay is expected.

HSE public health Dentist Dr Anne O'Neill said while it is still early, there is a risk that stay-at-home restrictions during the pandemic have affected children's dental health.

She said children should be offered treatment from first or second class, but this is happening in all areas because of a lack of HSE dentists.



Dental Scheme collapse raised with Taoiseach in Dáil

EXPRESS REPORTER

news@leinsterepress.ie

Local Sinn Féin TD Brian Stanley raised the collapse of the School Dental Scheme and the Medical Card Dental Scheme with Taoiseach Micheál Martin in the Dáil last week.

Deputy Stanley told the Taoiseach that,

"The school dental scheme has collapsed. The dental treatment service scheme, DTSS, for adult medical card patients has collapsed.

"There are no dentists in the county providing this service or who will take on new clients, so the dental scheme in the county is non-existent.

The reply to a parliamentary question on the DTSS confirms that no dentists are willing to take it on. There are boys and girls of 16 or 17 years of age who have never seen a dentist.

The Taoiseach saw a dentist when he was attending school, as did

"I. we all saw a dentist when we were in second or third class."

"I raised this issue with the then Minister for Health and now Tánaiste, Deputy Varadkar, eight or nine years ago as this issue was developing, and

he told me they should privatise the whole thing.

It has been privatised. We are providing the budget but we have no service.

"Can we train and employ a few dentists to provide this service?"


An Taoiseach replied by saying "That is easier said than done. The budget is there, and I take the Deputy's point but there are negotiations going on.

We have to get value for the taxpayer but we do have to get a service for the public also. Those talks are continuing, and they need to be brought to a resolution"

Following the Dáil exchange Deputy Stanley has called for better workforce planning such as:

- Training a significant number of dentists
- Offering young dentists
- Ensure dentists that are employed in this way, work only within the public system.

"In the immediate term the Department of Health must do everything possible to get a successful outcome to their negotiations with the Private Dentists representatives and get the DTSS functioning."

Publication:	irishtimes.com	Media Cost (€):	24622	
Date:	Tuesday, March 8, 2022	Reach	710,600	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	1,140	

Why am I having to pay for fillings that should be free for a pensioner?

Q&A: Dentists are leaving medical card system in droves, but such moves should be flagged

I am 71, have a full medical card and full PRSI contributions for optical and dental treatment. My query is this. My dentist told me that I need a filling on a back tooth. She said it will be €100. I thought that I was entitled to two free fillings a year.

Today the hygienist and the exam with the dentist cost €25.

Could you please advise if I should be entitled to free fillings

Mr SM, email

Dental care for medical card holders is becoming an increasingly tricky situation. The bottom line is that there is a growing gulf between what you should be entitled to and what you can actually get.

The rules on dental services for medical card holders – which includes most older people – are pretty straightforward. As outlined by the HSE, every medical card holder is entitled to a free dental examination every year. As your recent visit was likely to have been your first one this year, it should have been free.

As far as I understand, free teeth-cleaning is available only to people with certain specific conditions. According to a recent report on State-funded dental care, the routine “scale and polish” service that used to be available under the medical card scheme is suspended, as are X-rays.

However, the Department of Social Protection says that pensioners who met the PRSI coverage rules in the year before they retired (which you say you do) are entitled to payment of up to €42 towards the cost of a scale and polish. Dentists can, however, charge a fee of up to a further €15 for this work.

On that basis, you should have been charged no more than €15 for the hygienist's work as far as I can see.

Inside Business with Ciaran Hancock · The ripple effect of Russian sanctions

What are those PRSI rules? Well, you need to have paid a minimum of 260 PRSI stamps over your working life and you need to have either 39 paid or credited PRSI weekly payments in the year you turned 64 or the year before it, or you need to have 26 paid PRSI stamps in both the year you turn 64 and the one before it.

Why 64? I don't know. It is called the “relevant tax year” in this regard by the Department of Social Protection and is defined as the second-last completed tax year before you turn 66.

Fillings

On fillings, should they be necessary, you should be entitled as you thought to two free fillings in any calendar year. If you needed any teeth pulled, that too would be covered, without limit.

There are other benefits that should be available, although they are discretionary. These include provision of dentures, for which the dentist will need to seek specific HSE approval.

The issue you appear to have run into is the gap between what you are entitled to and the number of private dentists prepared to undertake medical card work. This is becoming a serious problem, with dentists complaining that the system is close to collapse.

The problem dates back to the financial crash back in 2008. For most people, this is now hopefully a distant memory, but if you are a medical card patient seeking dental care, it certainly isn't.

With austerity, the HSE imposed reduced pay for dentists under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme and the Treatment Benefit Scheme. More significantly, it said treatments were only available to medical card holders on an emergency basis – including fillings – according to an independently commissioned report by the [Irish Dental Association](#) published last month. That report's author, Ciaran O'Neill, who is professor of health economics at Queen's University Belfast, said nothing had changed in the 13 years since.

The problems with the medical card scheme – especially the amount paid under it – has apparently led to an exodus of private sector dentists out of the programme. The number prepared to do medical card work has fallen by more than 50 per cent in the past two years, according to the incoming president of the [Irish Dental Association](#), Dr Caroline Robins. The association says it is estimated that only about 750 of the State's 2,000 private dentists are now accepting medical card work. The areas worst hit appear to be Dublin and Wicklow

“A service that relies on self-employed general dental practitioners will not function if it refuses to at least cover

their costs of delivery,” Prof O'Neill says in his report. “Adequate funding remains central to it or any scheme's success.”

The dentists accuse the HSE of “arbitrary and unilateral changes” in the medical card contract and say that “explicit written promises from representatives of the Department of Health have been reneged upon to the anger and dismay of dentists and their patients”.

So where does that leave you? It appears that if your dentist did offer medical card services, she no longer does so. Your choices are really either to pay as a private patient at your current practice or contact your local health centre where they will have a list of dentists doing medical card work – assuming they can take any more onto their books.

Fair notice

To be fair, if your dentist previously undertook medical card work and no longer does so, I would expect that they would inform all medical card patients to this proactively. This should be done ideally when the decision to withdraw from medical card services is made, but certainly at the point when an appointment is made.

The problem here is twofold. Firstly, people have a relationship with a dentist. They use that particular person because they feel secure in their care. People rarely move dentist unless they relocate to a different part of the country or have a poor experience in their care. And moving can be an uncertain process.

Secondly, people generally only contact their dentist at a time of need. Suddenly finding that you have to either pay up for an unexpected and unwelcome bill or scramble around for a provider who will accept medical cards even as you suffer pain is not something any of us would be happy to do. Hence the reason any reasonable practitioner should give proper advance notice.

To charge people who understood their treatment was covered under the service is not remotely reasonable.

Please send your queries to Dominic Coyle , Q&A, The Irish Times, 24-28 Tara Street, Dublin 2, or by email to dcoyle@irishtimes.com. This column is a reader service and is not intended to replace professional advice

Caption:

'My dentist told me that I need a filling on a back tooth which would cost €100. I thought that I was entitled to two free fillings a year.'

Publication:	radiokerry.ie	Media Cost (€):	6	
Date:	Monday, March 7, 2022	Reach	3,196	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	80	

26 Kerry dentists have left treatment scheme for medical card holders

26 dentists in Kerry have left treatment scheme for medical card holders.

Under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS), adult medical card holders can access a range of dental services and treatments.

Dentists have previously called for a new approach to the scheme, saying it's not viable.

The figures, published in today's Irish Independent, show 52% of the Kerry dentists involved have left the scheme.

Publication:	sundayworld.com	Media Cost (€):	628	
Date:	Monday, March 7, 2022	Reach	37,400	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	554	

Dental care crisis Medical card patients nationwide at risk as dentists abandon HSE scheme in droves

It is estimated there are now just 750 private dentists signed up to treat medical card patients. There has been an exodus of dentists participating in the free scheme.

Medical card holders who are struggling to find dental care face a postcode lottery following an exodus of private dentists from the scheme.

New figures reveal the extent of the patchy services across the country, with some areas becoming blackspots due to a lack of access.

In Dublin south-east, 46 dentists are no longer treating medical card holders – a drop of 85pc since 2016.

During the same time, Wicklow has seen a fall of 72pc in dentists participating, while the exit has reached 54pc in Laois and Offaly, 52pc in Kerry, 51pc in Wexford, 45pc in Meath and 43pc in Sligo and Leitrim.

The national picture has emerged in figures provided by the HSE to Sinn Féin spokesman on health David Cullinane.

It is estimated there are now just 750 private dentists signed up to treat medical card holders – one per 2,000 patients.

The growing number of dentists abandoning the scheme follows dissatisfaction with fees that were cut during the recession and have not been restored since, which, they say, makes the service financially unviable.

The dentists also are frustrated at the lack of clinical decision-making power they are allowed and the range of treatments available under the scheme, which has meant more patients are having teeth extracted when there may be alternative forms of treatment available.

The scheme originates from the early 1990s but is out of date in an era when everyone expects the perfect smile.

The **Irish Dental Association** said there are now less than half the dentists in the scheme compared to two years ago.

Mr Cullinane said that “many dentists who remain do it out of conscience and a sense of empathy but they want to see urgency from the Health Minister and the Government on fixing their contract.

“We have been raising this issue for over a year but there is no sense of urgency from the minister and the problem is getting worse.”

Separate figures from the HSE show the crisis extends beyond regular dentistry, with 27,000 children and adults on waiting lists for dental and oral surgery as well as orthodontics.

Mr Cullinane said the figures include 2,950 children and 1,392 special care patients who need **Dental Surgery** under a general anaesthetic.

“More than 80pc of patients on orthodontic waiting lists have been here for longer than a year and 40pc are waiting more than three years.”


The HSE said “it is aware of the difficulties facing medical card holders who are seeking dental treatment”.

A spokeswoman said where a patient cannot access a dentist, the HSE attempts to assist.

Health Minister Stephen Donnelly said it is a “priority” to address the crisis.

He said talks have taken place between the Department of Health and the **Irish Dental Association** with a view to investing €10m on top of the €56m estimate for the scheme this year.

He said he had been assured by the HSE that it will look for emergency cover for any medical card patients who cannot access a dentist.

Publication:	independent.ie	Media Cost (€):	8496	
Date:	Monday, March 7, 2022	Reach	809,200	
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No dentists available for medical card holders

Disappointment resumes for medical card holders who continue to be left behind in Drogheda, as they are facing a constant battle to find a dentist.

L ocal Sinn Féin TD, Imelda Munster said it is “disgraceful” that there is not one dentist in the town who will accept medical card patients.

Deputy Munster has continued to push the matter in the Dáil with Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform Michael McGrath, where she called on the government to address the ongoing crisis in public dental services in Louth as a matter of urgency.

Over the last two years, 21 dentists have left the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS), with more expected to follow.

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“This leaves only fourteen dentists currently working under the scheme in Co. Louth, and none of them are working in Drogheda,” said Deputy Munster

“Adult medical card holders haven't been able to access dental treatment in over a year. This includes people who have serious illnesses including cancer and diabetes, and people who have complex dental needs.

“For well over a year people have been left with no dental care, many of them in pain, while the government has dragged its heels with regards to getting the scheme back up and running effectively.

“On top of this we have 5,000 primary school age children in Louth who are awaiting routine dental check ups. There are a further 6,000 in Meath. First class check-ups have been done away with due to the shortage of dentists, and there is a significant backlog for sixth class check ups.

The government have made contact with the [Irish Dental Association](#) regarding the matter.

“People are entitled to dental care under their medical cards, and it's high time this was made available to them.”

Caption:

Deputy Munster has continued to push the matter in the Dáil with Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform Michael McGrath



Medical card holders struggle to find care as dentists quit scheme

Only 750 private dentists have signed up to treat medical card patients across the country

Eilish O'Regan

MEDICAL card holders who are struggling to find dental care face a postcode lottery following an exodus of private dentists from the scheme.

New figures reveal the extent of the patchy services across the country, with some areas becoming blackspots due to a lack of access.

In Dublin south-east, 46 dentists are no longer treating medical card holders – a drop of 85pc since 2016.

During the same time, Wicklow has seen a fall of 72pc in dentists participating, while the exit has reached 54pc in Laois and Offaly, 52pc in Kerry, 51pc in Wexford, 45pc in Meath and 43pc in Sligo and Leitrim.

The national picture has emerged in figures provided by the HSE to Sinn Féin spokesman on health David Cullinane.

It is estimated there are now just 750 private dentists signed up to treat medical card holders – one per 2,000 patients.

The growing number of dentists abandoning the scheme follows dissatisfaction with fees that were cut during the recession and have not been restored since, which, they say, makes the service financially unviable.

The dentists are also frustrated at the lack of clinical decision-making power they are allowed and the range of treatments available under the scheme, which has meant more patients are having teeth extracted when there may be

alternative forms of treatment available.

The Irish Dental Association said there are now less than half the dentists in the scheme compared to two years ago.

Mr Cullinane said that “many dentists who remain do it out of conscience and a sense of

empathy but they want to see urgency from the Health Minister and the Government on fixing their contract.

“We have been raising this issue for over a year but there is no sense of urgency from the minister and the problem is getting worse.”

Crisis

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Mr Cullinane said the figures include 2,950 children and 1,392 special care patients who need dental surgery under a general anaesthetic.

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Mr Donnelly said he had been assured by the HSE that it will look for emergency cover for any medical card patients who cannot access a dentist.



Health Minister Stephen Donnelly has prioritised the issue



Nearly 3,000 children await dental surgery as pandemic leads to tooth decay fears

Eilish O'Regan

DENTISTS are worried eating habits and higher consumption of sugary foods by children during the pandemic will see a rise in tooth decay.

HSE public health dentist Dr Anne O'Neill said while it is still early, there is a risk that stay-at-home restrictions during the pandemic have impacted children's dental health.

"We know that spending on crisps and sweet foods went up. Parents were working from home and everyone was doing their best in difficult circumstances," she said.

Dr O'Neill said the disruption caused by Covid-19 has compounded existing problems in the HSE's dental services for schoolchildren.

Children should be screened and offered treatment from first or second class and then at different stages, but this is not happening in full in all areas because of a lack of HSE dentists.

Covid-19 has led to even more problems with a "system that was under-resourced", Dr O'Neill added.



It has been hampered by earlier moratoriums on recruitment and a proposed change in policy which would see children referred to private dentists instead of being treated by HSE dentists.

Figures obtained by Sinn Féin health spokesperson David Cullinane show there are 2,950 children on public dental surgery lists for procedures under general anaesthetic.

Of this figure, 899 children come from Limerick, Tipperary and Clare. There are 417 children on the list in Laois, Offaly, Longford and Westmeath.

By comparison, the waiting list for children waiting for dental extraction under general anaesthetic in mid-2020 was 1,500. The

pandemic disrupted services and led to a slowdown, which was compounded by the redeployment of some dental staff to areas such as testing and tracing.

Dr O'Neill said the proposed new policy – which would see HSE dentists concentrating on children with special care needs and more complex problems

– has not progressed. She is in favour of the existing system being retained and properly funded.

Stalled

The new plan – which has stalled over the pandemic – would involve contracting care to private dentists.

"It is assumed there is capacity in the private system," said Dr O'Neill.

"The current system is not broken, just under-resourced."

She would like the current service to be more conducive to prompting parents to bring their child for screening before there is a problem with their teeth.

"It does not promote attendance early on when we might be able to carry out some reversible work."



HSE dentist Dr Anne O'Neill (inset) fears lockdown may have damaged children's dental health



Dental tourists warned of potential pitfalls as numbers flying out on the rise again

Nick Bramhill

IRISH dental patients have been urged to "do their homework" before travelling abroad for cheaper treatment. It comes as far-flung dental tourism destinations announce they are back open for business.

A number of dental clinics across Europe have noted a surge in bookings from Irish customers since the lifting of Covid-19 travel restrictions.

Most dental holidaymakers require significant procedures, such as implants, root canal and crowns, which often cost a fraction of the equivalent treatment in Ireland.

However, the Irish Dental Association has advised people seeking treatment abroad to "be more discerning".

They warn that a previous survey found that as many as three out of four Irish dentists treated patients for problems arising from procedures they had received overseas.

A spokesperson for the group said: "The Irish Dental Association is concerned about the quality of dental care in other countries and urges people to get consultations at home first."

"We need to encourage people who may be travelling abroad to focus on the quality of work they receive, and whether that work is really necessary – not just the price of that work."

However, a number of prac-

tices in Hungary, which are popular with Irish patients, insist that opting for cheaper treatment in their clinics is a "no-brainer".

Ildiko Cservenyak, managing director of Access Smile – which has a clinic in Budapest, Hungary and a sister clinic in Dublin – said: "The interest has started to return now following a very quiet two-year period during the pandemic."

"The way things are looking, I would expect us to return to

pre-pandemic levels of business later this summer.

"Most clients who go abroad for dental treatment need major work done. They are not coming over simply for a check-up."

"Dentists in Hungary are very well respected, and it has been the primary country for dental tourism for the past couple of decades. People can get quality care at around half the price of what they'd pay in Ireland for treatments like root canals, crowns and implants."

"Also, if someone comes to Hungary for dental treatment, they can claim the tax back once they return to Ireland."

Mary Flanagan, the Irish representative for Kreativ – a Budapest practice that provides an aftercare service in Dublin – said Irish patients are flying out daily for treatment since the easing of restrictions.

"The demand is very high, because the standards are extremely high and the finan-

cial savings are considerable," she said. "Along with that, you also get a holiday out of it in the beautiful city of Budapest."

"Before the pandemic, we'd have had about 150 people from Ireland heading over every month for major treatment. But the numbers are increasing again every month."

"In January, around 70 went over, and last month it was 100. I think we'll be back to pre-pandemic levels in the next few weeks."



Medical card holders having difficulty finding a dentist

:: Mass exodus of practitioners from state scheme

Eilish O'Regan

HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

MEDICAL card holders who are struggling to find dental care face a postcode lottery following an exodus of private dentists from the scheme.

New figures reveal the extent of the patchy services across

the country, with some areas becoming blackspots due to a lack of access.

In Dublin south-east, 46 dentists are no longer treating medical card holders – a drop of 85pc since 2016.

During the same time, Wicklow has seen a fall of 72pc in dentists participating, while

the exit has reached 54pc in Laois and Offaly, 52pc in Kerry, 51pc in Wexford, 45pc in Meath and 43pc in Sligo and Leitrim.

The national picture has emerged in figures provided by the HSE to Sinn Féin spokesman on health David Cullinane.

It is estimated there are now just 750 private dentists signed up to treat medical card holders – one per 2,000 patients.

The growing number of dentists abandoning the scheme follows dissatisfaction with fees that were cut during the recession and have not been restored since, which, they say, makes the service financially unviable.

The dentists also are frustrated at the lack of clinical

decision-making power they are allowed and the range of treatments available under the scheme, which has meant more patients are having teeth extracted when there may be alternative forms of treatment available.

The scheme originates from the early 1990s but is out of date in an era when everyone expects the perfect smile.

The Irish Dental Association said there are now less than half the dentists in the scheme compared to two years ago.

Mr Cullinane said that “many dentists who remain do it out of conscience and a sense of empathy but they want to see urgency from the Health Minister and the Government on fixing their contract.

“We have been raising this issue for over a year but there is no sense of urgency from the minister and the problem is getting worse.”

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“More than 80pc of patients on orthodontic waiting lists have been here for longer than a year and 40pc are waiting more than three years.”

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A spokeswoman said where a patient cannot access a dentist, the HSE attempts to assist.

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He said talks have taken place between the Department of Health and the Irish Dental Association with a view to investing €10m on top of the €56m estimate for the scheme this year. He said he had been assured by the HSE that it will look for emergency cover for any medical card patients who cannot access a dentist.



Nearly 3,000 children awaiting dental surgery amid rise in tooth decay

Eilish O'Regan

DENTISTS are worried eating habits and higher consumption of sugary foods by children during the pandemic will see a rise in dental decay.

HSE public health dentist Dr Anne O'Neill said while it is still early, there is a risk that stay-at-home restrictions during the pandemic have affected children's dental health.

"We know that spending on crisps and sweet foods went up. Parents were working from home and everyone was doing their best in difficult circumstances," she said.

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Children should be screened and offered treatment from first or second class and then at different stages, but this is not happening in full in all areas because of a lack of HSE dentists.

Covid-19 has led to even more problems with a "system that was under-resourced", she added.

It has been hampered by earlier moratoriums on recruitment and a proposed change in policy which would see children referred to private dentists instead of being treated by HSE dentists.

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Dr O'Neill said the proposed new policy - which would see HSE dentists concentrating on children with special

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The new plan - which has stalled over the pandemic - would involve contracting care to private dentists.

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NUMBER OF PRIVATE DENTISTS WHO HAVE LEFT SCHEME FOR MEDICAL CARD HOLDERS

REGION	NUMBER	%
Dublin South East	46	85%
Wicklow	7	72%
Dublin west	36	71%
Laois/Offaly	20	54%
Kerry	26	52%
Dublin North Central	37	51%
Wexford	27	51%
Dun Laoghaire	12	46%
Waterford	25	45%
Meath	11	44%
Sligo/Leitrim	9	43%
Dublin South City	21	40%
Dublin South West	21	36%
Louth	11	34%
Carlow/Kilkenny	19	34%
North Cork	14	32%
Longford/Westmeath	18	32%
Clare	8	31%
Galway	47	29%
Kildare /West Wicklow	16	28%
Mayo	10	26%
Cavan/Monaghan	12	25%
Roscommon	5	23%
South Tipperary	7	23%
North Tipperary /East Limerick	4	14%
Cork South Lee	14	13%
North Dublin	8	11%
North West Dublin	3	10%
Donegal	3	7%
Cork North Lee	5	5%
West Cork	1	4%



Blackspots revealed in free dental care system

Eilish O'Regan

THE standard of free dental care across the country now varies greatly depending on where you live, the *Irish Independent* can reveal.

The departure of many private dentists from the medical card scheme has left a two-tier dental care system, with some areas becoming blackspots due to the lack of free dentists available.

New figures show the extent of the patchy services, which has left medical card holders struggling to find dental care.

It is estimated there are now only 750 private dentists signed up to treat medical card holders – one per 2,000 patients.

In southeast Dublin, 46 dentists are no longer treating medical card holders – a drop of 85pc since 2016.

During the same time, Wicklow has seen a fall of 72pc in


dentists participating, while the exit has reached 54pc in Laois and Offaly, 52pc in Kerry, 51pc in Wexford, 45pc in Meath, and 43pc in Sligo and Leitrim.

The national picture has emerged as latest figures reveal there are 27,000 children and adults on waiting lists for dental and oral surgery as well as orthodontics.

This includes 2,950 children and 1,392 special care patients who need dental surgery under a general anaesthetic.

Dentists fear the situation will worsen, with unhealthy eating habits during the pandemic expected to lead to a rise in tooth decay among children.

Reports: Pages 12-13

Publication:	independent.ie	Media Cost (€):	12744	
Date:	Monday, March 7, 2022	Reach	809,200	
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Dental tourists warned of potential pitfalls as numbers flying out on the rise again

Irish dental patients have been urged to “do their homework” before travelling abroad for cheaper treatment. It comes as far-flung dental tourism destinations announce they are back open for business. A number of dental clinics across Europe have noted a surge in bookings from Irish customers since the lifting of Covid-19 travel restrictions.

Most dental holidaymakers require significant procedures, such as implants, root canal and crowns, which often cost a fraction of the equivalent treatment in Ireland.

However, the **Irish Dental Association** has advised people seeking treatment abroad to “be more discerning”.

They warn that a previous survey found that as many as three out of four Irish dentists treated patients for problems arising from procedures they had received overseas.

A spokesperson for the group said: “The **Irish Dental Association** is concerned about the quality of dental care in other countries and urges people to get consultations at home first.

“We need to encourage people who may be travelling abroad to focus on the quality of work they receive, and whether that work is really necessary – not just the price of that work.”

However, a number of practices in Hungary, which are popular with Irish patients, insist that opting for cheaper treatment in their clinics is a “no-brainer”.

Ildiko Cservenyak, managing director of Access Smile – which has a clinic in Budapest, Hungary and a sister clinic in Dublin – said: “The interest has started to return now following a very quiet two-year period during the pandemic.

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“The way things are looking, I would expect us to return to pre-pandemic levels of business later this summer.

“Most clients who go abroad for dental treatment need major work done. They are not coming over simply for a check-up.

“Dentists in Hungary are very well respected, and it has been the primary country for dental tourism for the past couple of decades. People can get quality care at around half the price of what they'd pay in Ireland for treatments like root canals, crowns and implants.


“Also, if someone comes to Hungary for dental treatment, they can claim the tax back once they return to Ireland.”

Mary Flanagan, the Irish representative for Kreativ – a Budapest practice which provides an aftercare service in Dublin – said Irish patients are flying out daily for treatment since the easing of restrictions.

“The demand is very high, because the standards are extremely high and the financial savings are considerable,” she said. “Along with that, you also get a holiday out of it in the beautiful city of Budapest.

“Before the pandemic, we'd have had about 150 people from Ireland heading over every month for major treatment. But the numbers are increasing again every month.

“In January, around 70 went over , and last month it was 100. I think we'll be back to pre-pandemic levels in the next few weeks.”

Publication:	Daily Mirror (ROI)	Media Cost (€):	820	
Date:	Monday, March 7, 2022	Reach	28,633	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	106	

Check-up call alert to tooth care tourists

IRISH dental patients have been urged to "do their homework" before travelling abroad for cheaper treatment.

Most dental holidaymakers require significant procedures, such as implants, root canal and crowns, which often cost a fraction of the equivalent treatment in Ireland.

However, the [Irish Dental Association](#) has advised people seeking treatment abroad to "be more discerning".

A spokesperson for the organisation added: "We need to encourage people who may be travelling abroad to focus on the quality of work they receive, and whether that work is really necessary, not just the price of that work."

Caption: TREATMENT Dental work

Publication:	The Times (ROI)	Media Cost (€):	793	
Date:	Monday, March 7, 2022	Reach	6,730	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	973	

Failing dentistry will come back to bite us

With misery and alarm across Europe, the failings of our own health service may feel marginal, even with Omicron zig-zagging around. But physical suffering, disabling misery and risk of serious illness come in many shapes, and as ineffective months go by one health department shame needs talking about.

American jokes about "British teeth" have a new bite. More than six million of our citizens have no NHS dentist and can't get one. Even before the pandemic and Brexit, which lost us some EU professionals, one in ten of us had no regular check-ups and nowhere to go in a dental emergency without paying privately. Dentists have been warning of the shortfall for years. The risk of mouth cancers, appalling abscesses and desperate medieval measures is not small.

It got worse in the pandemic. As masks come off in the exhilarating rush for freedom there will be some nastily damaged smiles revealed.

Ordinary routine dental care was banned early in the crisis, which hit the viability of practices dependent on NHS income and closed many for good. Treasury support for freelancers most dentists are was often unavailable at their income level, as was business rates relief.

But even before that, in 2019 the independent watchdog Healthwatch reported that in many areas from Cumbria to Cornwall, and certainly in East Anglia, nine out of ten calls were about the impossibility of finding a dental surgery. The cosy NHS website Find a Dentist leads as often as not to a reiteration of "No new NHS patients". Even a waiting list is little comfort: one country town practice in my area advertised that it would be taking names from 09.00 on a particular day. Whole families formed queues before dawn, most to be turned away.

In the delicate human mouth, even the simplest need unmet can escalate and in the long run cost the NHS far more in serious medical crises.

One acquaintance, 14 months on waiting lists after her practice closed, broke a tooth a year ago and suffers repeated tongue abscesses and gum infections as a result, requiring antibiotics. After a taxpaying life as a carer she knows it will cost well over £700 to fix this privately (I know the sum intimately because I had the same problem but was luckily able to pay up after only six weeks waiting for a private appointment. Doesn't feel like levelling-up, does it?).

Another case, reported by Healthwatch, was of a healthy 48-year-old man who lost a cap, paid £110 privately for temporary treatment but couldn't afford the quoted thousand-quid cost of replacement and treatment. His abscesses too meant repeated antibiotics and months eating nothing beyond soup.

The British Dental Association warns of undiagnosed oral cancers and of practices resorting, as the backlog grows, to immediate extraction rather than treatment. Urgent cases grow worse with neglect: apropos of Covid-19, we constantly hear of the danger to the "exceptionally clinically vulnerable", and it takes little imagination to work out how unwise it is for them to risk oral infections. Dentistry is a classic example of a stitch in time saving nine.

Suffolk is one of many "dental deserts" and without a professional that stitch can be desperate. Our local news bulletin showed a grisly handful of teeth pulled by individuals. Peter Aldous, MP for

Waveney, set up a debate in Westminster Hall with Judith Cummins, the South Bradford MP, and received from the junior health minister, Maria Caulfield, merely an assurance that she was "working at pace" oh, that phrase!

Outside, the campaign group Toothless in England was demonstrating. Not as media-friendly as BLM or gender ideologues but closer to home for many.

Before Brexit and Covid-19, the problem was getting acute due to a notoriously ill-conceived NHS contract with dentists who are, remember, practising a technical, specialist, highly skilled and trained branch of surgery. Under the government points system, though, it can mean that a patient needing only a 15-minute check may earn them the same as one who has to have hours of treatment. A target system also can lose them funding.

The result, summed up by one exasperated dentist who now works only privately, is that the system would work reasonably in an area of high income and low need but is disastrous where there is high need and low income. Healthy, affluent patients with stable lives and good diets, who can travel miles and stop work for treatment, do all right.

Those in more fragile and challenging circumstances do not. The costing system makes poor-to-low income patients unviable for NHS practices, whether in high-need rural areas (like Aldous's constituency) or cities. I can only reiterate that this is the opposite of levelling-up.

Nor, dentists say, does funding recognise the expensive reality of frontline care. It never did, but after our airborne

viral disaster there is an enhanced need for high quality PPE and the eyewatering cost of installing and powering classy new airhandling equipment in the surgery. If you have been to a private dentist lately you will have seen these weird machines in action. Moreover, in NHS practices a treadmill of regular work means little opportunity to "upskill", little job satisfaction and exhaustion. Dental school places need to be increased, too.

There is supposed to be a new contract brewing and a deal about EU practitioners. But without sharp and prompt action the nation's teeth will carry on rotting, breaking, infecting and pushing more pressure on to the NHS. It needs attention.

In areas of high need and low income the system is disastrous As masks come off some nastily damaged smiles will be revealed

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Date:	Friday, March 4, 2022	Reach	500	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	379	

‘There are boys and girls of 16 and 17 who have never seen a dentist’ – Laois TD fumes over Dental Scheme

Local Sinn Féin TD Brian Stanley raised the collapse of the School Dental Scheme and the Medical Card Dental Scheme with Taoiseach Micheál Martin in the Dáil.

Deputy Stanley told the Taoiseach that the school dental scheme has ‘collapsed’.

He said: “The **Dental Treatment Service Scheme**, DTSS, for adult medical card patients has collapsed.

“There are no dentists in the county providing this service or who will take on new clients, so the dental scheme in the county is non-existent.

“The reply to a parliamentary question on the DTSS confirms that no dentists are willing to take it on. There are boys and girls of 16 or 17 years of age who have never seen a dentist.

“The Taoiseach saw a dentist when he was attending school, as did I. We all saw a dentist when we were in second or third class.

“I raised this issue with the then Minister for Health and now Tánaiste, Deputy Varadkar, eight or nine years ago as this issue was developing, and he told me they should privatise the whole thing.

“It has been privatised. We are providing the budget but we have no service. Can we train and employ a few dentists to provide this service?”

An Taoiseach replied by saying: “That is easier said than done.

“The budget is there, and I take the Deputy’s point but there are negotiations going on.

“We have to get value for the taxpayer but we do have to get a service for the public also. Those talks are continuing, and they need to be brought to a resolution”

Following the Dáil exchange Deputy Stanley has called for better workforce planning such as:

Training a significant number of dentists; Offering young dentists; Ensure dentists that are employed in this way, work only within the public system.

Deputy Stanley added: “In the immediate term the Department of Health must do everything possible to get a successful outcome to their negotiations with the Private Dentists representatives and get the DTSS functioning.”

SEE ALSO – Question over sale of Junction 17 land leads to row and Council adjournment following ‘issue with women’ jibe



Solution must be found to allow medical card holders avail of DTSS - Cowen

Fianna Fáil TD for Laois-Offaly, Barry Cowen, has said medical card holders must be allowed to avail of dental treatment following a reduction in the number of dentists participating in the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS) since the start of the pandemic.

Deputy Cowen was commenting following the publication of a research paper by Ciaran O'Neill, Professor of Health Economics at Queens University Belfast, which recommends a credit or voucher scheme.

"I understand that the report in question will be considered by the Department as part of its preparations for a substantive review of the DTSS to begin by the second quarter of this year.

"Having raised this issue with the Minister for

Health, I am aware that his immediate priority is to seek to address the problem of medical card patients having difficulties in accessing a service in some parts of the country, a priority I share.

"To date, two rounds of discussions have been held with the IDA, the most recent on 17 Dec last when the Department and the HSE outlined provisional proposals to invest additional resources in the Scheme, including €10m provided in the Budget, on top of the 2022 estimate allocation of €56 million.

"I believe a further round of discussions is due to take place early next month. I welcome this progress and will continue to liaise with the relevant stakeholders until such a time as a viable solution has been found."

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Date:	Thursday, March 3, 2022	Reach	10,880	
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Cork dentist: It's time to fix failings in public dental care

An **Oral Healthcare** system that discriminates against the most vulnerable and economically disadvantaged in our community is no longer acceptable, says Dr Kieran O'Connor

LAST week, the **Irish Dental Association** published an independently commissioned research report that called once more for the urgent reform of the medical card scheme. Within it, an alternative proposal to improve access to dental care for medical card patients was set out.

The report comes at a time when the **Dental Treatment Service Scheme** (DTSS) or medical card scheme is in full-blown crisis and nearing the brink of total collapse.

But none of this is new.

In the four years to December, 2021, almost one in five contracted dentists in Cork have withdrawn from the scheme while, nationally, there is thought to be less than 700 dentists treating medical card patients, which is half the number of DTSS contracts held by dentists up to two years ago.

To put it in context, that is one dentist per 2,000 medical card patients and parts of the country where there is a single dentist covering an entire town or region.

Neither is the Dental Hospital, which has traditionally been a care pathway for Cork patients, a viable option anymore given it too is over-stretched and under-resourced.

Decades in decline

The medical card scheme was established by the Department of Health in 1994; it predates both the internet and mobile phones.

Perversely, it dictates what materials dentists can use and what procedures can be carried out. Only teeth extractions are unlimited.

Following the financial crisis of 2008, reimbursement levels to dentists were reduced and treatments available to medical card holders were suspended or available in emergency cases only. This has not changed in the 13 years since.

As a profession, dentists have felt side-lined and ignored by successive governments for more than a decade, contracted to provide an extremely limited and wholly restrictive service to some of the most vulnerable and economically disadvantaged people in our communities.

As care providers, we have never understood the rationale behind a scheme that restricts the number of preventative treatments allowed, such as fillings to save a tooth, while permitting an unlimited number of extractions.

Under the parameters of the medical card scheme, we have no clinical autonomy to make decisions that we feel are in our patients' best interests. It shouldn't matter whether you are a medical card patient or not, but it does. We cannot use any modern-based science for our clinical treatments, which leave our hands completely tied.

A cynical person might argue that the system is weighted towards cost containment over health by providing an accelerated pathway to extraction for those who cannot afford or access the alternative. This simply cannot be allowed to continue.

A future model of care

Dentists want an entirely new scheme that reflects modern dental practice and care, one that allows people to access contemporary evidence-based dental care in their community. It is critical that we move away from a system that allows restrictions to be placed by the State on treatments which are covered.

The independently commissioned research paper by Professor Ciaran O'Neill, Professor of Health Economics at Queens University Belfast, sets out a model for a credit or voucher scheme that provides an entitlement of a given value for a specified period of time to cover a given range of services and care. In Portugal, a scheme of this type was shown be associated with improved oral health outcomes.

Professor O'Neill estimates that the annual cost of such a scheme offering a voucher of between €100 and €500 towards dental care would be a total cost per annum of approximately €108m and €232.5m respectively.

For context, the spend on the medical card scheme in 2021 was €39.6m and a far cry from the €86m spend in 2009.

Despite the suggestion of an extra €10m being made available this year, it is not nearly enough to solve the


underlying problems associated with the scheme or have any substantial impact on the rapid exodus of dentists from it.

Dentists want to be able to provide care for medical card patients, but, if the reform of the scheme continues to be ignored and left in this current state of flux, the Government is leaving us with little choice but to continue to minimise our involvement or withdraw.

While we remain deeply frustrated, we want to find a sustainable solution that benefits all parties, but especially our patients. We urge the Government to engage with us as an immediate priority as the longer it is left, the less it becomes about how the medical card scheme can survive but more about how soon it will end. And that is in no-one's interest.

Caption:

Following the financial crisis of 2008, reimbursement levels to dentists were reduced and treatments available to medical card holders were suspended or available in emergency cases only. This has not changed in the 13 years since, says Dr O'Connor. Picture: Stock.

Publication:	The Echo	Media Cost (€):	3208	T 
Date:	Thursday, March 3, 2022	Reach	9,449	
Page:	16	Size (Sq. Cm)	401	



Time to fix failings in public dental care

An oral healthcare system that discriminates against the most vulnerable and economically disadvantaged in our community is no longer acceptable, says Dr Kieran O'Connor



LAST week, the Irish Dental Association published an independently commissioned research report that called once more for the urgent reform of the medical card scheme. Within it, an alternative proposal to improve access to dental care for medical card patients was set out.

The report comes at a time when the Dental Treatment Service Scheme (DTSS) or medical card scheme is in full-blown crisis and nearing the brink of total collapse.

But none of this is new.

In the four years to December, 2021, almost one in five contracted dentists in Cork have withdrawn from the scheme while, nationally, there is thought to be less than 700 dentists treating medical card patients, which is half the number of DTSS contracts held by dentists up to two years ago.

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2,000 medical card patients and parts of the country where there is a single dentist covering an entire town or region.

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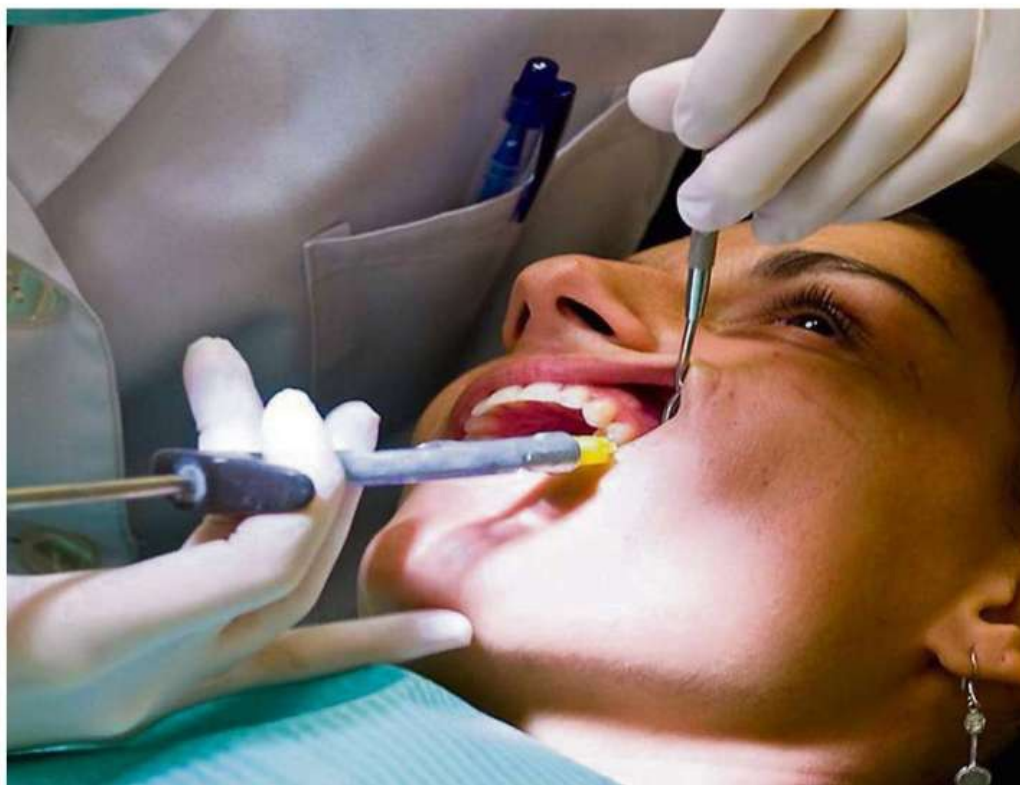
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There are thought to be fewer than 700 dentists treating medical card patients, which is half the number of DTSS contracts held by dentists up to two years ago.

Picture: Stock



Donnelly launches €350m plan to cut waiting lists

Focus on high-volume procedures including cataracts, hip and knee replacements

Waiting List Action Plan aims to treat 1.7 million patients this year

PAUL CULLEN
Health Editor

A €350 million investment in hospital waiting lists will reduce them to their lowest level in five years, according to Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly.

Of 75,000 people currently waiting for inpatient and day-case procedures, the aim is to have “almost all” treated by the end of the year.

Yesterday, Mr Donnelly launched the 2022 Waiting List Action Plan, the first of a “multi-annual” reform programme to “stabilise and reduce” waiting lists and waiting times in the health service.

The plan aims to treat 1.7 million patients this year; with a record 1.5 million people set to be added to waiting lists during the year, the anticipated reduction of 200,000 will bring waiting lists down to 2017 levels, the Minister expects.

The plan covers “active” waiting lists for inpatient and day-case procedures, outpatient appointments and gastro-intestinal scopes, but not other waiting lists for patients whose treatment is considered to be in hand.

There will be a particular focus on 15 high-volume inpatient and day-case procedures so that every person waiting for more than six months who is clinically ready will receive an offer of treatment, Mr Donnelly said. The list include cataracts,

cystoscopies, hip replacements and knee replacements.

Dental surgery

There will also be a focus on treating skin lesions, varicose veins, tonsillectomies and dental surgery.

Other areas of focus include angiograms, laparoscopic cholecystectomy, septoplasties, hysteroscopy, laparoscopy (gynaecology), total abdominal hysterectomy and inguinal hernia repair.

Too many people are waiting for too long for healthcare in the public system, Mr Donnelly told a media briefing. While the goal is to build up capacity as quickly as possible, hundreds of thousands of people need quicker access to care now and “that’s what this plan is about”.

As much as possible of the investment will be progressed in the public system, said deputy director general at the Department of Health Dean Sullivan, but in some specialties this may be “difficult” to achieve.

Some €150 million of the €350 million is going to the National Treatment Purchase Fund.

At least half of the €150 million going to the fund is expected to be spent in the private sector.

Mr Donnelly said this €75 million had to be seen in the context of a €22 billion health budget. “I know some people in the Dáil say this is unacceptable, but should we not pay GPs, who

are private, or dentists and pharmacists, or pharmaceutical companies, or private contractors who build hospitals?”

Asked how this plan to cut waiting lists would differ from previous ones, Mr Donnelly said the €350 million investment was higher than ever before. The plan is being driven from the highest levels, from the secretary general of the department down. It also embraces new innovations to improve the pathway of care for patients, such as a focus on advanced nurse practitioners.

High burnout

The NTPF funds hospitals, not individual consultants, its chief executive, Liam Sloyan, explained, though where consultants work overtime for the plan they can be paid overtime if provided for in their contract.

He declined to say how much the fund paid for specific procedures but said it operated a public procurement process.

Acknowledging high levels of exhaustion and burnout among staff, chief nursing officer Rachel Kenna said the plan would support the workforce by delivering an environment that allowed them to do the job they were employed to do, as well as delivering opportunities for career development.

Asked about the ongoing talks with hospital consultants about a new public-only contract, the Minister acknowledged there were “differing views” around the table but said he hoped to see them concluded quickly.

Publication:	irishtimes.com	Media Cost (€):	14176	
Date:	Friday, February 25, 2022	Reach	710,600	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	639	

Hospital waiting lists: €350m plan aims to clear backlog by end of year

Focus on high-volume procedures including cataracts, hip and knee replacements

A €350 million investment in hospital waiting lists will reduce them to their lowest level in five years, according to Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly

Of 75,000 people currently waiting for inpatient and day-case procedures, the aim is to have “almost all” treated by the end of the year.

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There will be a particular focus on 15 high-volume inpatient and day-case procedures so that every person waiting for more than six months who is clinically ready will receive an offer of treatment, Mr Donnelly said. The list include cataracts, cystoscopies, hip replacements and knee replacements.

There will also be a focus on treating skin lesions, varicose veins, tonsillectomies and **Dental Surgery**.

Other areas of focus include angiograms, laparoscopic cholecystectomy, septoplasties, hysteroscopy, laparoscopy (gynaecology), total abdominal hysterectomy and inguinal hernia repair.

‘Difficult’ to achieve

Too many people are waiting for too long for healthcare in the public system, Mr Donnelly told a media briefing. While the goal is to build up capacity as quickly as possible, hundreds of thousands of people need quicker access to care now and “that’s what this plan is about”.

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Asked about the ongoing talks with hospital consultants about a new public-only contract, the Minister acknowledged there were “differing views” around the table but said he hoped to see them concluded quickly.

Caption:

This year’s plan aims to treat 1.7 million patients, with 1.5 million people to be added to waiting lists during the



Dental scheme

THE Irish Dental Association (IDA) has published an independently commissioned research paper outlining an alternative proposal to the medical card scheme or Dental Treatment Service Scheme (DTSS), to bring about its urgent reform.

Prepared by Professor Ciaran O'Neill, Professor of Economics at Queens University Belfast, the paper sets out a model for a credit or voucher scheme that provides an entitlement of a given value for a specified period of time to cover a given range of services and care.

He estimates the annual cost of such a scheme offering a voucher for €100 towards dental care would be about €108 million. His report also estimates the costs associated with vouchers of a higher value, between €200 and €500, as a total cost per annum of €93m and €232.5m respectively.

"This scheme would provide coverage for commonly required services at levels of reimbursement that reflect the cost of care," says Professor O'Neill. "It would afford a degree of clinical autonomy that would remove perversities in the current system and help rebuild relations between the public, providers, and Government."

In Portugal, a scheme of this type was shown to be associated with improved oral health outcomes.

Dentists want an entirely new scheme that reflects modern dental practice and care, and allows vulnerable groups to access routine dental care in their community. We have never understood the rationale behind a scheme that restricts the number of preventative treatments allowed, such as fillings to save a tooth, while permitting an unlimited number of extractions.

In addition, the latest suggestion from the Department of Health that dentists would consider providing a scale and polish and an expanded examination as an interim response has no prospect of retaining dentists in the scheme either.

In fact, proposals which effectively require dentists to enhance further the existing subsidisation of the costs of providing treatment will only have one outcome and that is a further migration of dentists from the scheme.

There are now believed to be just 750 dentists treating medical card patients, less than half the number of DTSS contracts held by dentists up to two years ago.

Dr Caroline Robins, President-Elect of IDA and Chair of GP Committee

■ Letters must include a full address and may be edited. Please include a daytime telephone number for verification.



Calls for a new credit scheme to assist dental costs

■ **Martha Brennan**

THE Irish Dental Association (IDA) has called for a new credit scheme to be introduced to make dental care more accessible in Ireland.

According to the association, there is currently only one dentist for every 2,000 medical cardholders around the country and many preventative treatment measures aren't covered by the current scheme in place.

The association is asking the Government to consider a new Dental Credit Scheme model where vouchers between €100 to €500 would be offered to medical cardholders for dental treatment.

The model, which would cost between €108m and €232m, was researched by Prof Ciaran O'Neill of Queen's University Belfast.

IDA CEO Fintan Hourihan said: "It is incumbent on the Government and HSE to reform this urgently and the model set out by Prof O'Neill deserves serious consideration.

"It is becoming increasingly difficult to see how the medical card scheme can survive, which means more and more of our most vulnerable patients will lose out on important access to dental care."

Between 2015 and 2020, there was a 31% drop in the number of dentists holding contracts for the Dental Treatment Services Scheme, the current scheme available to medical cardholders.

Under the scheme, medical cardholders are entitled to specific dental treatments such as extractions, a dental examination, and two fillings a year.

The IDA said that reimbursement levels to dentists taking part in the scheme were reduced following the financial crisis of 2008 and have not been increased since. It is believed around 750 dentists are currently treating medical card patients in Ireland.

President-Elect of the Irish Dental Association, Dr Caroline Robins, said: "We have never understood the rationale behind a scheme that restricts the number of preventative treatments allowed, such as fillings to save a tooth, while permitting an unlimited number of extractions."

Dentists to fight tooth and nail for reform

■ Sean MURPHY

DENTISTS have blasted a scheme that allows unlimited extractions for medical card patients but only two fillings.

The Irish Dental Association yesterday called for urgent reform to the practices and fee structure.

They want medical cards for the scheme replaced by a new voucher system that would see patients receive credit of between €100 and €500 for a wider range of dental work.

The IDA made the call amid claims that dentists are threatening to quit the HSE's Dental Treatment Service Scheme because they fear it is on the brink of "total collapse".

Dr Caroline Robins, who has a practice in Co Carlow, claims the "costs we incur are greater than what we receive under the current scheme".

Fillings

She said: "We have never understood the rationale behind a scheme that restricts the number of preventative treatments allowed, such as fillings to save a tooth, while permitting unlimited extractions."

IDA chief Fintan Hourihan noted: "There is currently one dentist per 2,000 medical card patients – this cannot be allowed to continue."

The IDA yesterday published recommendations for the overhaul of the DTSS. It estimates the annual cost of a replacement voucher scheme of between €100 and €500 would be €108m and €232.5m respectively.


Minister Stephen Donnelly said the HSE, is due to meet with the dentists' group "again in the next couple of weeks to progress matters".



ACTION NEEDED:
Fintan Hourihan



NO HARD FILLINGS: Calls for overhaul of DTSS

Publication:	Daily Mail (ROI)	Media Cost (€):	2,114	
Date:	Tuesday, February 22, 2022	Reach	30,428	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	374	

One dentist for every 2,000 medical card patients

THERE is just one dentist per 2,000 medical card patients in the country, new figures have revealed.

And there are now believed to be just 750 dentists treating medical card holders, less than half the number two years ago. In parts of the country, there is just one dentist covering an entire town or region.

Ciaran O'Neill, economics professor at Queen's University Belfast, prepared research that was published by the [Irish Dental Association](#) (IDA).

It found that a proposal to hand out €100 vouchers for people to visit the dentist would improve people's oral health. Prof. O'Neill estimates that the annual cost of such a scheme would be €108million.

His report also estimates that issuing higher-value vouchers of €200 to €500 would cost €93million and €232.5million a year respectively.

'This scheme would provide coverage for commonly required services at levels of reimbursement that reflect the cost of care,' he said.

'It would afford a degree of clinical autonomy that would remove perversities in the current system and help rebuild relations between the public, providers and Government.'

A similar scheme in Portugal was shown to be associated with 'improved oral health outcomes'.

Dentist Dr Caroline Robins said: 'We have never understood the rationale behind a scheme that restricts the number of preventative treatments allowed, such as fillings to save a tooth, while permitting an unlimited number of extractions.'

IDA chief Fintan Hourihan said: 'What this paper shows is that an entirely new scheme is required, and the model set out by Prof. O'Neill deserves serious consideration by all parties to the current scheme.

'The spend on the medical card scheme in 2021 was €39.6million and a far cry from the €86million spend in 2009. Despite the suggestion of an extra €10million being made available this year, it is not nearly enough to solve the underlying problems associated with the scheme or have any substantial impact on the rapid exodus of dentists from it.

'It is becoming increasingly difficult to see how the medical card scheme can survive, which means more and more of our most vulnerable patients will lose out on important access to dental care.'

'An entirely new scheme is required'

Publication:	Daily Mirror (ROI)	Media Cost (€):	5,000	
Date:	Tuesday, February 22, 2022	Reach	28,633	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	394	

DENTIST FURY OVER MEDICAL CARD SCHEME

DENTISTS have blasted a scheme that allows unlimited extractions for medical card patients but only two fillings.

The [Irish Dental Association](#) yesterday called for urgent reform to the practices and fee structure.

They want medical cards for the scheme replaced by a new voucher system that would see patients receive credit of between €100 and €500 for a wider range of dental work.

The IDA made the call amid claims dentists are threatening to quit the HSE's [Dental Treatment Service Scheme](#) because they fear the medical card scheme is on the brink of "total collapse".

2k The number of card patients under current

Dr Caroline Robins, who has a practice in Co Carlow, claims the "costs that we incur are greater than what we receive under the current scheme".

€The cost of

She said: "We have never understood the rationale behind a scheme that restricts the number of dental preventative treatments allowed, such as fillings to save a tooth, while permitting unlimited extractions.

"The latest suggestion from the Department of Health that dentists would consider providing a scale and polish and an expanded examination as an interim response has no prospect of retaining dentists in the scheme either. In fact, proposals 233m estimated annual providing a €500 voucher scheme which effectively require dentists to enhance further the existing subsidisation of the costs of providing treatment, will only have one outcome and that is a further migration of dentists from the scheme." IDA chief Fintan Hourihan added: "There is currently one dentist per 2,000 medical card patients - this cannot be allowed to continue.

"It is incumbent on the Government and HSE to reform this scheme urgently."

The IDA yesterday published recommendations for the overhaul of the DTSS. It estimates the annual cost of a new replacement voucher scheme of between €100 and €500 would be €108million and €232.5million respectively.

Dentists believe the proposed reforms would improve care for medical card holders and allow them to get treatments that are only available to them in emergencies.

Minster Stephen Donnelly said the HSE, which has been asked by the Irish Mirror for a response to the IDA's claims, is due to meet with the dentists' group "again in the next couple of weeks to progress matters".

news@irishmirror.ie

Caption: HURT FILLINGS Dentists want vouchers to be introduced

Publication:	westernpeople.ie	Media Cost (€):	6	
Date:	Tuesday, February 22, 2022	Reach	500	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	474	

‘Increasingly difficult to see how the medical card scheme can survive’, dentists warn

The [Irish Dental Association](#) (IDA) has warned that the medical card scheme is near total collapse, with there currently being just one dentist per 2,000 medical card patients.

The warning comes following the publication of an independently commissioned research paper by Professor of Health Economics at Queens University Belfast, Professor Ciaran O'Neill, which has suggested that a credit or voucher scheme would “remove perversities in the current system”.

According to the research paper, a new system would also help rebuild relations between the public, providers, and Government.

The model set out in the research paper is a credit or voucher scheme that provides an entitlement of a given value for a specified period of time to cover a given range of services and care.

The IDA pointed out that reimbursement levels to dentists were reduced following the financial crisis of 2008 and treatments available to medical cardholders were suspended or available in emergency cases only. This has not changed in the 13 years since.

Between 2015-2020 there was a 31 per cent decline in the number of dentists holding [Dental Treatment Service Scheme](#) (DTSS) contracts, with there now being just 750 dentists treating medical card patients.

‘Rapid exodus’

Fintan Hourihan, CEO of the IDA, said: “What this paper shows is that an entirely new scheme is required, and the model set out by Professor O'Neill deserves serious consideration by all parties to the current scheme.

“The spend on the medical card scheme in 2021 was €39.6 million and a far cry from the €86 million spend in 2009.

“Despite the suggestion of an extra €10 million being made available this year, it is not nearly enough to solve the underlying problems associated with the scheme or have any substantial impact on the rapid exodus of dentists from it.


“Without any meaningful plan or roadmap to reform coming from Government, it is becoming increasingly difficult to see how the medical card scheme can survive, which means more and more of our most vulnerable patients will lose out on important access to dental care.

“Ultimately, a new model has to move away from a system which allows restrictions to be placed by the state on treatments which are covered.

“A new scheme will only succeed if it attracts sufficient numbers of dentists as a professionally appropriate and economically viable alternative, and, most importantly, it has the confidence of the patients it is designed to serve.

“While we remain deeply frustrated, we invite the Government to engage with us to explore new ways of improving access to dental care, including this proposal from Professor O'Neill.

“Ultimately, patients, Government and dentists require a more sustainable solution that ensures access to care for those who need it most.”

Publication:	sundayworld.com	Media Cost (€):	196	
Date:	Monday, February 21, 2022	Reach	37,400	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	209	

Tooth hurts Medical card patients should get vouchers as dentists abandon HSE scheme, report says

There has been an exodus of dentists participating in the free scheme – with just 750 dentists now left to treat medical card holders, and no service in some areas, due to HSE fees.

Dentists are in demand (Rui Vieira/PA)

Eilish O'Regan

Medical card holders should be given a voucher or credit worth between €100 and €500 for dental care by the HSE, according to a new plan published today.

The independently commissioned research paper by Ciaran O'Neill, Professor of Health Economics at Queens University Belfast, recommends a "credit or voucher" scheme.

There has been an exodus of dentists participating in the free scheme – with just 750 dentists now left to treat medical card holders, and no service in some areas, due to HSE fees.

Fintan Hourihan, head of the [Irish Dental Association](#) (IDA) which commissioned the research, said: "There is currently one dentist per 2,000 medical card patients. This cannot be allowed to continue.

"It is incumbent on the Government and HSE to reform this scheme urgently and the model set out by Professor O'Neill deserves serious consideration by all parties to the current scheme."

Publication:	carlowlive.ie	Media Cost (€):	22	
Date:	Monday, February 21, 2022	Reach	986	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	788	

Dentists want action with 'medical card scheme nears total collapse'

The [Irish Dental Association](#) (IDA) has published an independently commissioned research paper outlining an alternative proposal to the medical card scheme or [Dental Treatment Service Scheme](#) (DTSS), to bring about its urgent reform.

Dentists say they have published the report calling for the introduction of 'credit or voucher' system as the current "medical card scheme nears total collapse."

Prepared by Professor Ciaran O'Neill, Professor of Economics at Queens University Belfast, the research paper sets out a model for a credit or voucher scheme that provides an entitlement of a given value for a specified period of time to cover a given range of services and care.

In his report, Professor O'Neill estimates that the annual cost of such a scheme offering a voucher for €100 towards dental care would be approximately €108 million. His report also estimates the costs associated with vouchers of a higher value, between €200 and €500, as a total cost per annum of €93m and €232.5m respectively.

"This scheme would provide coverage for commonly required services at levels of reimbursement that reflect the cost of care," says Professor O'Neill in his report. "It would afford a degree of clinical autonomy that would remove perversities in the current system and help rebuild relations between the public, providers, and Government."

In Portugal, a scheme of this type was shown be associated with improved oral health outcomes.

Welcoming the paper, President-Elect of the IDA and Chair of the GP Committee, Dr Caroline Robins said: "Dentists want an entirely new scheme that reflects modern dental practice and care, one that allows vulnerable groups to access routine dental care in their community. We have never understood the rationale behind a scheme that restricts the number of preventative treatments allowed, such as fillings to save a tooth, while permitting an unlimited number of extractions.

"In addition, the latest suggestion from the Department of Health that dentists would consider providing a scale and polish and an expanded examination as an interim response has no prospect of retaining dentists in the scheme either. In fact, proposals which effectively require dentists to enhance further the existing subsidisation of the costs of providing treatment will only have one outcome and that is a further migration of dentists from the scheme."

Reimbursement levels to dentists were reduced following the financial crisis of 2008 and treatments available to medical card holders suspended or available in emergency cases only. This has not changed in the 13 years since.

Prior to the pandemic, between 2017 and 2019, expenditure on the scheme had significantly fallen, while between 2015 and 2020, there was a drop of 31% in dentists holding DTSS contracts, continuing the downward trend in participating dentists that preceded the pandemic.

There are now believed to be just 750 dentists treating medical card patients, which is less than half the number of DTSS contracts held by dentists up to two years ago. To put it in context, that is one dentist per 2,000 medical card patients and parts of the country where there is just one dentist covering an entire town or region.

Fintan Hourihan, CEO of the [Irish Dental Association](#), said: "What this paper shows is that an entirely new scheme is required, and the model set out by Professor O'Neill deserves serious consideration by all parties to the current scheme.

"The spend on the medical card scheme in 2021 was €39.6m and a far cry from the €86m spend in 2009. Despite the suggestion of an extra €10m being made available this year, it is not nearly enough to solve the underlying problems associated with the scheme or have any substantial impact on the rapid exodus of dentists from it.


"Without any meaningful plan or roadmap to reform coming from Government, it is becoming increasingly difficult to see how the medical card scheme can survive, which means more and more of our most vulnerable patients will lose out on important access to dental care. Ultimately, a new model has to move away from a system which allows restrictions to be placed by the state on treatments which are covered. A new scheme will only succeed if it attracts sufficient numbers of dentists as a professionally appropriate and economically viable alternative, and, most importantly, it has the confidence of the patients it is designed to serve."

"While we remain deeply frustrated, we invite the Government to engage with us to explore new ways of improving

access to dental care, including this proposal from Professor O'Neill. Ultimately, patients, Government and dentists require a more sustainable solution that ensures access to care for those who need it most."

Caption:

Dentists want action with 'medical card scheme nears total collapse'

Publication:	rte.ie	Media Cost (€):	5247	
Date:	Monday, February 21, 2022	Reach	499,800	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	370	

Dentists call for voucher scheme to replace medical cards

Dentists have called for the current medical card scheme for dental patients to be replaced with a credit or voucher system.

President-Elect of the [Irish Dental Association](#), Dr Caroline Robins, said dentists want a new scheme "that reflects modern dental practice" and that allows vulnerable groups to access routine dental care in their community.

Speaking on RTÉ's Morning Ireland, she said the existing scheme was established over 28 years ago and dictates how dentists can provide treatment and care, what materials can be used and what procedures can be carried out.

Dr Robins said there are no referral pathways for patients and it is effectively a system that promotes extraction over preservation of teeth.

"We have no clinical autonomy to make decisions that we feel are in our patient's best interests. We can't use any modern based science for our clinical treatments. We really just feel like our hands are tied."

She said the the current scheme is "victorian" in its approach, adding, "I can effectively extract as many teeth that I wish from you, but I'm actually only allowed to place two fillings in your mouth in a year."

The [Irish Dental Association](#) commissioned a study to find a replacement scheme and said a voucher or credit scheme would allow dentists to treat patients on an individual basis.

The independently commissioned research paper was carried out by Professor of Health Economics at Queens University Belfast, Professor Ciaran O'Neill.

The research found that a 'Dental Credit Scheme' would bring reform to the current practices and fee structure, bringing them up to modern standards.

In his report, Pro O'Neill estimates that the annual cost of a voucher or credit scheme would be approximately €108 million.

The [Irish Dental Association](#) said there is now believed to be just 750 dentists treating medical card patients, which is less than half the number of DTSS contracts held by dentists up to two years ago.

In a statement, CEO of the [Irish Dental Association](#) Fintan Hourihan said that currently, there is one dentist per 2,000 medical card patients and that this cannot be allowed to continue.

Publication:	thejournal.ie	Media Cost (€):	5199	
Date:	Monday, February 21, 2022	Reach	330,140	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	519	

Calls for dental vouchers to replace medical cards as dentists warn scheme nears 'total collapse'

A raft of dentists have exited the medical card scheme over difficulties with the fee structure.
2 minutes ago

Views

Comments

PATIENTS WITH MEDICAL cards should be given vouchers of up to €500 for dental care, according to a report published today.

The research paper prepared by Ciaran O'Neill, Professor of Health Economics at Queens University Belfast, recommends a "credit or voucher" scheme to replace the medical card model currently in place.

Difficulties with the fee structure have seen a raft of dentists exiting the medical card scheme and the [Irish Dental Association](#) says it nears "total collapse".

The group says there are now believed to be just 750 dentists treating medical card patients, which is less than half the number of [Dental Treatment Service Scheme](#) contracts held by dentists up to two years ago.

This amounts to one dentist per 2,000 medical card patients and some parts of the country are left with few dentists available for medical card holders.

The paper, Dental Credit Scheme, estimates that a voucher for €100 towards dental care would cost the HSE around €108 million a year. Vouchers of a higher value, between €200 and €500, would cost between €93 million and €232.5 million.

"This scheme would provide coverage for commonly required services at levels of reimbursement that reflect the cost of care," Professor O'Neill says in the report.

"It would afford a degree of clinical autonomy that would remove perversities in the current system and help rebuild relations between the public, providers, and Government."

Fintan Hourihan, CEO of the [Irish Dental Association](#), said: "The spend on the medical card scheme in 2021 was €39.6 million and a far cry from the €86 million spend in 2009.

"Despite the suggestion of an extra €10 million being made available this year, it is not nearly enough to solve the underlying problems associated with the scheme or have any substantial impact on the rapid exodus of dentists from it.

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"Without any meaningful plan or roadmap to reform coming from Government, it is becoming increasingly difficult to see how the medical card scheme can survive, which means more and more of our most vulnerable patients will lose out on important access to dental care," Hourihan said.

The dentists' association says a new model needs to be introduced to move away from a system which allows restrictions to be placed by the state on treatments which are covered.

"A new scheme will only succeed if it attracts sufficient numbers of dentists as a professionally appropriate and economically viable alternative, and, most importantly, it has the confidence of the patients it is designed to serve," Hourihan added.

Dentists also say the current system limits the number of preventative treatments allowed, such as fillings to save a tooth, while permitting an unlimited number of extractions.

Short URL

Publication:	shannonside.ie	Media Cost (€):	11	
Date:	Monday, February 21, 2022	Reach	5,440	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	102	

New report finds dentist medical card scheme nearing 'total collapse'

The report was commissioned by the [Irish Dental Association](#). Dentists say the medical card scheme is nearing 'total collapse'.

An independently commissioned report by the [Irish Dental Association](#) has found that a voucher or credit system would help to rebuild relations between the public, Dentists and the Government.

The report is proposing that medical card holders be issued vouchers or credits of between 100 and 500 euro to allow them access more treatments.

Fintan Hourihan of the [Irish Dental Association](#) says it would mean a better service for patients.



Patients with medical cards should get up to €500 in vouchers for dentistry, says report

Eilish O'Regan

HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

MEDICAL card holders should be given a voucher or credit worth between €100 and €500 by the HSE for dental care, according to a new plan published today.

The independently commissioned research paper by Ciaran O'Neill, Professor of Health Economics at Queen's University Belfast, recommends a credit or voucher scheme.

There has been an exodus of dentists participating in the free scheme, with only 750 now left to treat medical card holders and no service in some areas, due to HSE fees.

Fintan Hourihan, head of the Irish Dental Association (IDA), which commissioned the research, said: "There is currently one dentist per 2,000 medical card patients. This cannot be allowed to continue.

"It is incumbent on the Government and the HSE to reform this scheme urgently, and the model set out by Professor O'Neill deserves serious consideration by all parties to the current scheme."

The research paper, titled Dental Credit Scheme, suggests a voucher for €100 toward dental care would cost

around €108m a year. Vouchers of a higher value, between €200 and €500, would cost the HSE €93m and €232.5m.

The report says the scheme "would provide coverage for commonly required services at levels of reimbursement that reflect the cost of care".

"It would afford a degree of clinical autonomy that would remove perversities in the current system and help rebuild relations between the public, providers and government," it adds.

President-elect of the IDA

'Currently one dentist per 2,000 medical card patients'

and chair of the GP Committee, Dr Caroline Robins, said: "Dentists want an entirely new scheme that reflects modern dental practice and care, one that allows vulnerable groups to access routine dental care in their community.

"We have never understood the rationale behind a scheme that restricts the number of preventative treatments allowed, such as fillings to save a tooth, while permitting an unlimited number of extractions.

"There are now believed to be just 750 dentists treating medical card patients, which is less than half the number of contracts held by dentists up to two years ago.

"To put it in context, that is one dentist per 2,000 medical card patients and parts of the country where there is just one dentist covering an entire town or region."

Mr Hourihan said: "The spend on the medical card scheme in 2021 was €39.6m and a far cry from the €86m spend in 2009.

"Despite the suggestion of an extra €10m being made available this year, it is not nearly enough to solve the underlying problems associated with the scheme or have any substantial impact on the rapid exodus of dentists from it.

"Without any meaningful plan or roadmap to reform coming from the Government, it is becoming increasingly difficult to see how the medical card scheme can survive, which means more and more of our most vulnerable patients will lose out on important access to dental care.

"Ultimately, a new model has to move away from a system which allows restrictions to be placed by the state on treatments which are covered."

Publication:	independent.ie	Media Cost (€):	13594	
Date:	Monday, February 21, 2022	Reach	809,200	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	556	

Patients with medical cards should get up to €500 in vouchers for dentistry, says report

Medical card holders should be given a voucher or credit worth between €100 and €500 for dental care by the HSE, according to a new plan published today.

The independently commissioned research paper by Ciaran O'Neill, Professor of Health Economics at Queens University Belfast, recommends a "credit or voucher" scheme.

There has been an exodus of dentists participating in the free scheme – with just 750 dentists now left to treat medical card holders, and no service in some areas, due to HSE fees.

Fintan Hourihan, head of the [Irish Dental Association](#) (IDA) which commissioned the research, said: "There is currently one dentist per 2,000 medical card patients. This cannot be allowed to continue.

"It is incumbent on the Government and HSE to reform this scheme urgently and the model set out by Professor O'Neill deserves serious consideration by all parties to the current scheme."

The research paper, Dental Credit Scheme, suggests a voucher for €100 towards dental care would cost around €108m a year. Vouchers of a higher value, between €200 and €500, would cost the HSE €93m and €232.5m.

The report says the scheme "would provide coverage for commonly required services at levels of reimbursement that reflect the cost of care.

"It would afford a degree of clinical autonomy that would remove perversities in the current system and help rebuild relations between the public, providers, and Government."

President-elect of the IDA and Chair of the GP Committee, Dr Caroline Robins, said: "Dentists want an entirely new scheme that reflects modern dental practice and care, one that allows vulnerable groups to access routine dental care in their community.

"We have never understood the rationale behind a scheme that restricts the number of preventative treatments allowed, such as fillings to save a tooth, while permitting an unlimited number of extractions.

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"To put it in context, that is one dentist per 2,000 medical card patients and parts of the country where there is just one dentist covering an entire town or region."

Mr Hourihan said: "The spend on the medical card scheme in 2021 was €39.6m and a far cry from the €86m spend in 2009.

"Despite the suggestion of an extra €10m being made available this year, it is not nearly enough to solve the underlying problems associated with the scheme or have any substantial impact on the rapid exodus of dentists from it.

"Without any meaningful plan or roadmap to reform coming from Government, it is becoming increasingly difficult to see how the medical card scheme can survive, which means more and more of our most vulnerable patients will lose out on important access to dental care.

"Ultimately, a new model has to move away from a system which allows restrictions to be placed by the state on treatments which are covered."

Caption:

There has been an exodus of dentists participating in the free scheme



1,560 pupils in Laois have not had their first dental check-up

By Carmel Hayes

MORE than 1,500 sixth-class children in Laois are still waiting for their first school dental assessment.

Latest HSE figures show that 2,872 sixth-class pupils in Laois-Offaly are awaiting routine check-ups, with 1,560 of them in Laois and 1,312 in Offaly.

The situation is described as a 'crisis' by local Sinn Féin TD Brian Stanley, who says the HSE needs to accept that the school dental scheme is 'broken'.

In a statement last week, he said: "The HSE is failing children by not providing them with their statutory entitlement of routine dental screening in schools.

"Children are not getting their first assessment until they attend secondary school. I am aware that some are waiting up to the age of 14 years and older and are in second year in post-primary school. Nationally, there are 100,000 children waiting on appointments."

He contended that both health minister Stephen Donnelly and the HSE need to accept that the scheme is broken, while the absence of treatment for children will lead to far

more serious dental and general health issues in later life.

He added: "The situation for adults with medical cards trying to get treatment under the DTSS is no better. This scheme has totally collapsed in Co Laois, with only one dental practice doing any work under the scheme, but they will not accept any new medical card patients. There were eight dentists in Laois in the scheme this time last year.

"This means there is no service available for those medical card patients to get treatment. Private dentists across the country have left the scheme in droves. We are informed that the government and the Irish Dental Association are currently in negotiations, but agreement appears to be elusive."

Deputy Stanley said that, at this stage, a number of directly-employed dentists must be recruited by the HSE, as good dentists will be attracted only by offers of permanent posts.

He added: "I'm also calling on the minister and the CEO of the HSE to recognise the reality that our dental services have regressed and that 40 years ago they were very much better."



Medical card dental services have collapsed

A MAYO TD has called on the Department of Health and the HSE to take emergency action to address the alarming lack of dentists offering services to medical card patients through the Dental Treatment Services Scheme/DTSS.

Said Deputy Rose Conway-Walsh: "Of all the dental practices throughout the county of Mayo, only one is currently treating medical card patients and taking on new patients but even then only for specific treatments.

"In a county the size of Mayo with a population of approximately 130,000, this is beyond shocking and cannot be allowed to go on.

"The HSE website information is completely out of date. This became evident when it didn't match up with the huge

amounts of people contacting my office desperate for dental care.

"Despite putting a number of questions to both the minister and the HSE, we were repeatedly referred back to the information online. We now know that this information is out of date.

"My office contacted each of the 30 dentists listed by the HSE.

"Ten said they are treating current medical card patients, but not taking any new patients.

"Ten of them told us they do not or are no longer providing any medical card dental treatment service.

"Two had retired, five of the phone numbers were out of service, and the others didn't respond to our call.

"When I highlighted this issue a year ago, the number of dentists offering these services had dropped from 50 in 2019 to 38 in 2021.

"We now know that even this alarming decline in official numbers masks the reality on the ground.

"There has been a severe decrease of government funding in the DTSS. Between 2017 and 2020, state spending on dental care for medical card patients decreased by 30%, from €5.5 million to €3.8 million.

"This led to unprecedented numbers of dentists leaving the scheme.

"The impact of this lack of services disproportionately falls on lower income groups, especially those who rely on medical cards."



Figures show that child dental waiting list have worsened while adults have nowhere to go claims TD

‘Thousands’ failed on dental treatment

Health: TD calls out failings for adults and children

CONOR GANLY
news@leinsterexpress.ie

The crisis in screening children for dental health problems has worsened and will cause serious problems later in life, according to a Laois Offaly TD who has laid the blame squarely at the door of the HSE.

Meanwhile, Brian Stanley, said adults with medical cards trying to get treatment through the HSE have no where to go to get treatment.

The Sinn Féin TD issued a statement in the wake of figures provided to his party. They show that the total amount of sixth class pupils in Laois/ Offaly awaiting routine check-up is 2,872.

He added that in Laois there are 1,560 children with 1,312 in Offaly. This compares with an all-time high of 2,507 last March - an increase of 365 children.

“The HSE is failing children by not

providing them with their statutory entitlement of routine dental screening in schools. The crisis continues to deteriorate, and figures received by Sinn Féin gives a county by county breakdown.

“Children are not getting their first assessment until they attend secondary school. I am aware that some are waiting up to the age of 14 years and older and are in second year in post primary school. Nationally, there are 100,000 children waiting on appointments,” he said.

Adults are also losing out on the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS). Treatment under the scheme is normally provided by private dentists contracted by the HSE the Community Health Organisation (CHO). The Sinn Féin TD says this is not working in Laois.

“This scheme has totally collapsed in Co Laois with only one dental practice doing any work under the

scheme, but they will not accept any new medical card patients. There were eight dentists in Laois in the scheme this time last year.

“This means there is no service available for those medical card patients to get treatment. Private dentists across the country have left the scheme in droves,” he said.

The TD said the Government and the Irish Dental Association are in negotiations, but agreement appears to be elusive. He wants the HSE to employ dentists.

“The Government and the HSE now need to face the reality that a number of directly employed dentists need to be recruited by the HSE. Good dentists will only be attracted with the offer of permanent posts,” he said.

Deputy Stanley said the Minister and the CEO of the HSE must recognise the reality that dental services have regressed and that 40 years ago they were very much better.



HSE accepts that children are waiting

The HSE says it is focused on reducing tackling dental waiting lists which has left nearly 1,700 Laois children getting check-ups in the third year of secondary school that should have been done in national school.

The executive also acknowledges that problems with the Dental Treatment Service Scheme for adults has also hit services for children with some 3,000 children in Laois and Offaly waiting for checks.

The HSE statement set out the state of play with school checkups.

"We acknowledge that the 6th class children of counties Laois and Offaly have not yet had their regular 6th class dental examination. The HSE School Dental Scheme waiting list for children currently in 6th class Laois/Offaly is 2821 (Laois - 1681, Offaly- 1140).

"We aim to see the current 6th class children in 1st year secondary school. At the moment our service is targeting 1st year Offaly and 3rd year Laois.

"We continue to explore all options to support children requiring services, and the HSE Dental Service in Laois/Offaly has emergency clinics available in both counties for all children, appointments are by telephone contact only.

"To reduce this waiting list, we have focused our dentists in clinics where there is greatest clinical need, this is regularly reviewed and

the service adapted as necessary," it said.

"We have had many staff who have been redeployed to Covid testing centres during the pandemic and the recent pressures in the last four weeks but thankfully they are returning to us as the pandemic eases," it said.

The HSE added that recruitment is underway.

"All staff vacancies are being filled as they arise and these staff will be focusing on reducing this waiting list over the coming months," it said.

The HSE accepted that there are problems with the scheme that is supposed to deliver free dental care to Medical Card holders.

"We note the reduction in private dentists from the national DTSS scheme, that has occurred across the country and this presents further challenges to the HSE dental service. In cases of emergency, the HSE dental service also has to provide emergency treatment for these adults.

"This has a further impact on the already limited dental resources available for our children with valuable taken clinical time from our targeted school screenings.

"We acknowledge the frustration felt by all parents and guardians of these children. The dental staff continue to put the patient at the core of our service, and are fully committed to providing the best clinical care in as timely a fashion as possible," said the statement.



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Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	713	

3,148 Clare children waiting for 'routine' dental appointment

THE HSE is coming under increasing pressure to provide more dental care after it emerged 3,148 Clare children are waiting for a routine dental appointment, writes Dan Danaher.

Deputy Violet-Anne Wynne has claimed the HSE is failing Clare children under the Health Act by not providing them with their statutory entitlement of routine dental screening in primary schools.

The Sinn Féin Deputy urged the government to take urgent action against the "unacceptable" figures.

"The HSE is not providing adequate dental screening to primary school children and is failing children under the Health Act.

"In Clare, there are an estimated 3,148 children are waiting for a routine dental appointment.

"Failure to provide this important healthcare runs the risk of seriously harming children's health. These figures are totally unacceptable and reveal a growing crisis in children's dental care."

Prior to Covid, reports from The [Irish Dental Association](#) (IDA) stated that an increasing number of children are only being offered examination and dental care for the first time at sixth class – instead of at first, second, fourth and sixth classes, the TD pointed out.

"This situation has been exacerbated by the impact of Covid. The system was already under huge pressure and this has only increased," she said.

The Sinn Féin TD outlined the strong links between good oral health and good physical health, and said it is vital that the HSE develop a contingency plan so children can receive this vital service.

She said the Dental Treatment Services Scheme does not receive enough funding, which is leaving many people, especially in rural regions like Clare out to dry.

Her call coincided with confirmation the HSE Dental Service is finding it difficult to recruit dental surgeons, and this is also impacting on the level of service provision.

This is an issue, which is being experienced in both the public and private dentistry services. However, the HSE is in the process of filling a long-term vacant dentistry post in Shannon Health Centre.

HSE Mid West Community Healthcare Dental Services provide school dental checks to Clare primary school children in Second and Sixth classes at school.

Children attend HSE dental clinics for the dental check and any necessary routine treatment to be completed.

As a direct result of Covid-19 restrictions and guidelines, HSE Mid West Community Healthcare Dental Services had no option but to defer routine screening for much of 2020 and early 2021. During this time, HSE dental clinics were restricted to an emergency service only.

In addition, a HSE spokesman outlined the ongoing need to adhere to public health guidance continues to have a direct impact on the capacity within clinics, and the scheduling of appointments.

Since the resumption of the school dental checks, the priority has been to offer appointments to children whose appointments were postponed as a result of the pandemic.

The Principal Dental Surgeon has confirmed that children are being called to clinics in the order in which they were due to be called prior to Covid-19.

This means children are older when they are called for their school dental check-up. Screening of children who were in Second and Sixth classes in the 2019/20 academic year was completed in September 2021.

Approximately 1,100 children from these classes in 2020/21 were called for screening between September and December 2021 and a further 2,170 children from this academic year will be called for screening over the coming months.

All children from those classes whose parents have completed and returned a consent form have already been invited or will be invited for an appointment.

HSE Mid West Community Healthcare Dental Service will continue to work through the waiting list in this manner.

It should be noted that these numbers refer to the routine screening of target classes only and do not include children and adults with special medical and dental needs who are also called for regular dental check-ups.

Between September and December of 2021, a further 427 patients were seen for emergency appointments.

These appointments are given when a parent/guardian calls to report that their child is in pain, and usually take place on the day of this call.

Publication:	midwestradio.ie	Media Cost (€):	1	
Date:	Friday, January 28, 2022	Reach	500	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	140	

Just one dental practice in Mayo is currently treating Medical Card patients, according to Mayo deputy

Emergency action is needed to address the lack of dentists offering services to Medical Card patients. That's according to Mayo deputy Rose Conway-Walsh.

She claims that only one dental practice in Mayo is currently treating Medical Card patients and taking on new patients, but even then it is only for specific treatments.

She says that in a county the size of Mayo that is "beyond shocking" and cannot continue.

Deputy Conway Walsh has made representations to the Department of Health and to the HSE on the issues surrounding the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS).

She told John Morley of Midwest News that a decrease in Government funding in the DTSS has resulted in large numbers of dentists leaving the scheme...



100 dentists opt out of medical card plan

Sean Murray

The number of dentists operating on a scheme for medical card holders continues to fall, with 100 dental practices leaving the scheme in the second half of 2021.

There were 1,151 dentists registered with the scheme in December. Last May, there were 1,247. In 2015, there were 1,847.

Under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS), adult medical card holders can access a range of dental services and treatments, such as an examination, two fillings in each calendar year, and extractions as necessary.

However, dentists say the "failed" scheme for medical-card holders must be replaced by a "fundamentally new approach", as it is not viable for many to remain on it.

Figures released to Social Democrat co-leader Róisín Shortall show that in West Cork, 27 dental practices offer the scheme, 30 in North Cork, and 24 in Co Kerry. Clare has just 17 on the scheme, Sligo/Leitrim has 12, Roscommon 11, and

Meath 10.

"In communities which rely heavily on the scheme, adequate provision of DTSS is vital. Without it, cost will remain a barrier to accessing care, resulting in more complex and costly interventions down the line," she said.

The HSE said continuing efforts "are being made to provide dental services to medical card holders.

"Where the HSE is notified that a patient is having difficulties in accessing dental services, assistance is offered in helping them access a dentist by way of providing a contractor list," it said.

"The HSE is working closely with the Department of Health to address difficulties currently being faced by medical card holders in accessing treatment.

"Negotiations between the Department of Health and the Irish Dental Association are ongoing and will hopefully increase the retention of dentists participating in the DTSS."

Chronic shortage of young dentists entering clinical practice

Ralph Riegel

IRELAND faces a dental crisis due to a chronic shortage of young dentists entering frontline clinical practice.

Irish Dental Association (IDA) president Dr Clodagh McAllister has urged the Government to take steps to increase the capacity of the Dublin and Cork-based dental schools – and to ensure clinical practice is more attractive for graduates to focus on as a career path.

An average of 60 graduates enter the industry each

year from Trinity College Dublin (TCD) and University College Cork (UCC) dental schools – but an increasing number are now choosing options other than clinical practice.

Ireland has more than 2,500 dentists registered with the IDA.

However, concerns over a future shortage of dentists for clinical practice have emerged given the increasing age profile of practising dentists, the number of retirements and the increasing difficulty private prac-

tices are experiencing in securing graduate partners.

“One of the reasons is that, on average, there are around 80 graduates from the two dental schools in Dublin and Cork,” Dr McAllister said.

Abroad

“Of that, not all of them would be available to the Irish market because some of them might go into house officer jobs, they want to specialise or even go abroad to get on vocational training schemes.

“We don’t have those schemes here any more – we used to but they were cut.

“Consequently as a result of that there is a shortage not only of dentists but of trained nurses and dental hygienists in the market.

“I have my own practice and it took me quite some time to get an associate – we were six months from start to finish trying to get an associate to work in the practice full-time.”

The shortage is now so acute that some larger urban dental practices are looking overseas for recruits.


“The problem with that is that we are in competition with all other jurisdictions for that pool of graduates,” Dr McAllister said.

“Maybe we need to look at how we structure the entry into undergraduate programmes and increase the number of graduates that are available.”

Another difficulty is the rate of drop-out from the Dublin and Cork programmes – further reducing the number of graduates who eventually enter the Irish market.



Age profile of dentists is rising

Publication:	irishexaminer.com	Media Cost (€):	1829	
Date:	Saturday, January 22, 2022	Reach	158,440	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	372	

Sharp drop in dentists on medical card holder scheme

The number of dentists operating on a scheme for medical card holders continues to fall, with just under 100 dental practices leaving the scheme in the second half of 2021.

Newly released figures show just 1,151 dentists registered with the scheme in December. Last May, there were 1,247 dentists on it. In 2015, there were 1,847 dental practices on the scheme.

Under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS), adult medical card holders can access a range of dental services and treatments such as an examination, two fillings in each calendar year and extractions as necessary.

However, the number of dentists registered has accelerated during the pandemic.

Now dentists say the “failed” scheme for medical card holders must be replaced by a “fundamentally new approach” as it is not viable for many to remain on it.

Figures released to Social Democrat co-leader Róisín Shortall show that in West Cork, 27 dental practices offer the scheme, with 30 for North Cork and 24 in Kerry.

Clare has just 17 on the scheme, Sligo/Leitrim has 12, Roscommon 11 and Meath 10.

“In communities which rely heavily on the scheme, adequate provision of DTSS is vital. Without it, cost will remain a barrier to accessing care, resulting in more complex and costly interventions down the line,” she said.

The HSE said continuing efforts “are being made to provide dental services to medical card holders.

“Where the HSE is notified that a patient is having difficulties in accessing dental services, assistance is offered in helping them access a dentist by way of providing a contractor list,” it said.

“The HSE is working closely with the Department of Health to address difficulties currently being faced by medical card holders in accessing treatment. Negotiations between the Department of Health and the [Irish Dental Association](#) are ongoing and will hopefully increase the retention of dentists participating in the DTSS.”

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Caption:

New figures show just 1,151 dentists registered with the Dental Treatment Services Scheme in December. Under the scheme, adult medical holders can access a range of dental treatments.

Publication:	newsgroup.ie	Media Cost (€):	12	
Date:	Wednesday, January 19, 2022	Reach	986	
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100,000 children left waiting on routine dental appointments


TD for Dublin Mid-West Mark Ward has said that the HSE are failing children under the Health Act by failing to provide children with their statutory entitlement of routine dental screening in primary schools. Teachta Ward received a response to a parliamentary question that showed almost 100,000 children nationally and 29,000 in CHO area 7, which includes Teachta Wards area of Dublin Mid West are waiting on routine dental examinations in primary schools.

Teachta Ward said: "Eligibility for dental services is a statutory entitlement under the Health Acts. Almost one million children aged up to and including 15 years are eligible for HSE Dental services. All of the HSE Dental Services are provided free of charge. "The HSE are not providing adequate dental screening to primary school children and are failing children under the Health Act. "Prior to Covid we have seen reports from The [Irish Dental Association](#) (IDA) that stated an increasing number of children are only being offered examination and dental care for the first time at sixth class – instead of at first, second, fourth and sixth classes

"This situation has been exacerbated by the impact of Covid. The bar was already set low for dental screening in primary schools and a response to a parliamentary question I received shows over 29,000 children are waiting on routine dental examinations in CHO area 7, which includes my own area of Dublin Mid West "I reported that there was a 63% decrease in dental screening in primary schools nationally in 2020. This was particularly bad in my own area of Dublin Mid-West, which is covered by CHO 7 which shows a 62% decrease.

"There are strong links between good oral health and good physical health, and it is vital that the HSE develop a contingency plan so children can receive this vital service "This situation is not unique to Dublin Mid West but it is replicated right across the state, where there are currently almost 100,000 children waiting on an appointment. Some areas offer appointments to 6th classes only and emergency services to other children under 16.

"Other areas like CHO area 9 where the HSE report due to the unprecedented pressures of the service that some children have not been placed on waiting lists and it is not planned to offer them an examination. "I called for a HSE to develop a contingency plan back in March of this year and because they have failed to plan over 29,000 children are left waiting on routine dental care in my area

Publication:	kfmradio.com	Media Cost (€):	31	
Date:	Tuesday, January 18, 2022	Reach	2,992	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	350	

Over 19,000 Children Waiting For Routine Dental Appointments In Ch07 Area

In the Kildare, West Wicklow and Dublin South West area HSE figures show 19,151 children waiting for a routine dental appointment.

The HSE is failing local children under the Health Act by not providing them with their statutory entitlement of routine dental screening in primary schools, according to Sinn Féin TD for Kildare North.

Reada Cronin is calling on the government to act immediately to rescue the situation.

According to figures released to Sinn Féin, almost 100,000 children across the state are facing these delays.

"It is utterly disgraceful to let these children wait like this for a routine dental appointment.

"It makes no health sense for the child and no financial sense for the state, because while they are not seen any dental situation they might have is worsening and will need more work," she said.

"Childhood is not all sunshine and roses for children. It can be extremely tricky for some and trying to navigate this in a pandemic and with bad teeth is an unnecessary burden to place on any child.

"There are many hardworking parents who can't afford the dentist.

"Their children should not be left with poor oral health and embarrassment about the state of their mouth because the HSE is lacking and the government has its priorities wrong.

"Prior to Covid, The [Irish Dental Association](#) (IDA) said that an increasing number of children are being offered examination and dental care for the first time only at Sixth Class – instead of in earlier years.


"Sixth Class is way too late," she insisted.

"This situation has been exacerbated by the impact of Covid.

"There are strong links between good oral health and good physical health, and it is vital that the HSE develop a contingency plan so children can receive this vital service.

"We need an immediate contingency plan to treat them in the time of Covid. They have a right to these services under the Health Act," she added.

Reada Cronin spoke on this morning's Kildare Today

Publication:	connachttribune.ie	Media Cost (€):	49	
Date:	Tuesday, January 18, 2022	Reach	11,900	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	159	

Over 5,600 children waiting on dental appointment in Galway

Galway Bay fm newsroom – Over 5,600 children are waiting for routine dental appointments in Galway. Sinn Féin TD for Galway West Mairéad Farrell argues the HSE is failing children under the Health Act by not providing children with their statutory entitlement to routine dental screening in primary schools.


Learn more

Figures obtained by the party reveal almost 100,000 children across the State are facing these delays.

In Galway, 2,874 children in 2nd class are waiting for such appointments, and a further 2,761 in 6th class.

Prior to Covid, reports from The [Irish Dental Association](#) stated that an increasing number of children are only being offered examination and dental care for the first time at sixth class – instead of at first, second, fourth and sixth classes.

Deputy Farrell says failure to provide such important healthcare runs the risk of seriously harming children's health...

Publication:	galwaybayfm.ie	Media Cost (€):	38	
Date:	Tuesday, January 18, 2022	Reach	9,180	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	163	

Over 5,600 children waiting on dental appointment in Galway

Galway Bay fm newsroom – Over 5,600 children are waiting for routine dental appointments in Galway. Sinn Féin TD for Galway West Mairéad Farrell argues the HSE is failing children under the Health Act by not providing children with their statutory entitlement to routine dental screening in primary schools.

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[More on Galway Bay fm news](#)

Publication:	Daily Mail (ROI)	Media Cost (€):	4,429	
Date:	Thursday, January 13, 2022	Reach	30,428	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	719	

Covid delays dental checks for 100,000 schoolchildren

Almost 100,000 children are waiting for routine dental examinations, which have been delayed due to a series of setbacks, new data shows.

Children have been affected across the country, due to school lockdowns, Covid RESTRICTIONS, the redeployment of dental staff as vaccinators, the cyberattack and an underlying shortage of dentists.

the pandemic has exacerbated resource problems, which were already denying children their legal right to free dental screening in many primary schools, and some children may never be given their missed appointments, the HsE has conceded.

Even before Covid, the [Irish Dental Association](#) (IDA) stated that an increasing number of children were only being offered examination and dental care for the first time at sixth class - instead of at first, second, fourth and sixth classes.

sinn Féin TD for Dublin mid-West, Mark Ward, said the HsE needed to make a contingency plan, to catch up on the missed appointments.

In a parliamentary question, he had asked Health Minister Stephen Donnelly how many children were on the waiting list. The response showed almost 100,000 children nationally, including 29,000 in the Kildare, West Wicklow and parts of Dublin including the west and south, were waiting on routine dental examinations in primary schools.

In other areas like Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) area 9, including Dublin North, North Central and North West, the HsE has reported that some children have not even been placed on waiting lists yet, and it is not planned to offer them an examination.

In its response to his parliamentary question, the HsE report for CHO area 9 stated: 'In line with Government guidelines the HsE limited access to dental services during the pandemic. A number of staff were also redeployed to train as vaccinators in our Covid vaccination centres and this caused further delays in the delivery of routine dental examinations for the majority of children in second class for the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 school year. However, during this period, emergency cases were offered an appointment.

'Due to the unprecedented pressures on the service and the continued rollout of the vaccination programme, these children have not been placed on waiting lists and it is not planned to offer them an examination.

those children in sixth class who have not been yet targeted from the 2020/2021 school year will be offered an appointment.'

Mr Ward said: 'Eligibility for dental services is a statutory entitlement under the health acts. Almost one million children aged up to and including 15 years are eligible for HsE dental services. All of the HsE dental services are provided free of charge.

'the HsE is not providing adequate dental screening to primary school children and are failing children under the Health Act.'

He added: 'the bar was already set low for dental screening in primary schools and a response to a parliamentary question I received shows over 29,000 children are waiting on routine dental examinations in CHO area 7, which includes my own area of Dublin mid-West.'

He said that across the state, there are almost 100,000 children waiting on an appointment. Some areas offer appointments to sixth classes only and emergency services to other children under 16.


In some areas, such as CHO 1, covering Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan and Monaghan, no children were waiting for their sixth class or first and second class routine check-ups until the pandemic struck. By 2020/2021, 3,975 children were waiting for sixth class appointments, and 2,951 waiting in the younger classes.

In the Limerick, North Tipperary and Clare area, there are now 10,581 on the waiting list. In Kildare, West Wicklow and Dublin South West, there are now 19,151 sixth and second class pupils waiting for their routine examinations.

In response, the HsE said each of the areas is now tackling the problem by prioritising certain school classes for oral examinations.

The HsE added that the dental service would continue to prioritise treatment for people with special care needs, those who are medically compromised and to provide emergency care for all eligible patients.

'The bar was already set low'

Publication:	independent.ie/regionals/kerryman	Media Cost (€):	68	
Date:	Tuesday, January 11, 2022	Reach	4,080	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	568	

Figures reveal 10% drop in Cork dentists on medical card scheme

FIGURES from the HSE have shown there has been an almost 10% reduction in the number of dentists across Cork accepting medical cards over the past five-years.

The figures were released by Cork/Kerry Community Healthcare on foot of a parliamentary question posed to Health Minister Stephen Donnelly placed by Cork East Labour TD Seán Sherlock.

In reply Priscilla Lynch, head of primary care services with Cork/Kerry Community Healthcare, wrote that dental treatment is provided to eligible children, medical card holders, special needs clients and others in the care of the HSE at various locations throughout Cork.

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Ms Lynch said that children under-16 and adults are treated by private dental practitioners contracted to the HSE under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS).

"Unfortunately, there has been a significant reduction in access to the DTSS for medical card holders in Cork as dentist who hold contracts under DTSS have either resigned their contracts or are not accepting new patients at this time," wrote Ms Lynch.

In October of last year, the HSE revealed that 460 of 17% of Irish dentists had left the scheme since 2016, 252 of those since the start of the Covid pandemic leaving parts of the country with just emergency cover.

Many of them have expressed concerns that the scheme restricts the number of preventative treatments allowed, such as fillings, while allowing an unlimited amount of extractions.

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The figures for Cork show that since in 2016 there were 300 dentists within the four Cork HSE coverage areas contracted to the DTSS. By the end of last year this number had dropped to 272, representing a 9.3% reduction over the five-year periods.

Ms Lynch wrote that, in line with the national trend, there are now fewer dentists in Cork operating the DTSS than there were before the Covid pandemic.

"As a result, there is an increase demand for care on the private dentists who continue to operate the scheme.

"In addition, many dentists who remain operating the scheme are not taking on new patients," she added.

Ms Lynch concluded that a long term solution to the issue would "require engagement at a national level between the various stakeholders."


Deputy Sherlock pointed out the HSE figures for the North Cork region showed an almost 18% in the number of local dentists on DTSS contracts, down from 45 in 2016 to 37 last year,

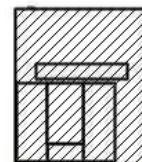
This has increased pressure on those dentists still aligned to the scheme and increased waiting times for medical card holders and other eligible people seeking dental treatment.

Calling for a review of the scheme, Deputy Sherlock said the combination of reduced numbers and dentist not accepting new patients on medical cards is starting to have an adverse impact on families.

"It's time for Government to review this service with the aim of ensuring that those who are entitled to dental services through the General Medical Services scheme actually receive those services," said Deputy Sherlock.

Meanwhile, Deputy Sherlock is conducting an online survey on dental treatment waiting times and other related issues, which can be accessed at tinyurl.com/2s4kn4fw.

Publication:	The Irish Times	Media Cost (€):	59363.94	T 
Date:	Saturday, January 8, 2022	Reach	58,131	
Page:	10, 11, 12, 13	Size (Sq. Cm)	2614	



HEALTH

Pandemic bodies

From our hearts to our eyes, weight, skin, mental health and teeth, the Covid-19 era has affected us all, but there are ways to address those changes, writes **June Shannon**

From the so-called "Covid stone" to "masene", the past two years have had an impact on our general health in more ways than one. While we stayed at home to protect ourselves, and the wider community, what impacts have the necessary public health restrictions had on our bodies, and what steps can we take to reverse the damage?

More than half or 51 per cent of people surveyed for the Healthy Ireland Survey 2021 revealed that they drink more, smoke more, have gained weight or reported a worsening of their mental health in the past 12 months, showing the worrying impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the health of the nation.

The survey, which was published in December, represents a detailed insight of a time interval during which Covid-19 restrictions had a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of the people of Ireland.

Weight

According to the findings of the 2021 Healthy Ireland survey almost three out of 10 people (29 per cent) reported that their weight had increased during the pandemic, with weight increases reported most often by women aged over 30 and mothers.

The survey also revealed that 36 per cent of people reported consuming two or more unhealthy snack foods daily, with 24 per cent consuming one unhealthy snack on a daily basis.

Working from home meant that for most people the daily commute by foot from the

train station or bus stop to the office was cut so our activity levels fell while at the same time we had 24/7 access to the fridge.

The pandemic also meant that some people were perhaps getting take-aways more often in a bid to support their local restaurants and, according to social media posts, a lot of banana bread and sour dough bread was baked.

Louise Reynolds is a registered dietitian and communications manager with the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute. She says that while our eating habits have changed as a result of the pandemic, as a dietitian the most important thing for her is that people have a healthy relationship with food.

"The whole cycle of beating ourselves up if we put on a little bit of weight and then going on a really strict crash diet and maybe losing a few pounds but then going back to you know, overeating. That's not sustainable and it doesn't make you feel good," she says.

Reynolds says the pandemic has been "a

huge challenge" for everybody, and it is best not to add another challenge in the mix by pressurising ourselves to be a particular weight.

Instead, she suggests that for the new year to try to be "your best weight".

"Your best weight is the weight you can live your happiest, healthiest and best life at. Let's step away from the scales. Let's not be too hard on ourselves... the conversations around weight, let's not have those in front of our children. Ideally, let's not have those conversations at all. You know, because we all know what we should do. But it's putting pressure on people."

For the new year, Reynolds suggests making some simple positive changes. For example, looking at things we could eat more of, such as fruit and vegetables. She also suggests cutting back on meat and having one or two plant-based meals a week, which as well as being good for your health is also good for the planet.

Mental health

The 2021 Healthy Ireland survey revealed that 81 per cent of people reported feeling less socially connected due to the Covid restrictions. This was common among all age groups, although those aged 45-54 and women were more likely to be affected. Furthermore, 30 per cent of those surveyed reported a worsening of their mental health since the start of the pandemic.

General practice has been at the coalface of the pandemic from day one, and the vast majority of people with mental health difficulties are treated successfully in primary care.

Dr Brian Osborne is a GP in Galway and assistant medical director with the Irish College of General Practitioners. He says the Covid-19 crisis has had "profound economic, social and educational impacts".

"General practice is seeing at first hand the effects of the pandemic on the mental health of the population. Grief, financial loss, being out of work for the first time and isolation are major events in the lives of people. Individuals are presenting with increased levels of stress, irritability and poor sleep. Patients are presenting more commonly with loneliness, anxiety and depression," he explains.

Coupled with people presenting with new onset anxiety and depression, Osborne says GPs are also seeing people with enduring mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, experiencing more serious relapses.

He adds that while the pandemic has affected the mental health of all age groups, in his experience, young people in their late teens and early 20s have been particularly negatively impacted, with increased presentations of anxiety, depression and eating disorders seen in this cohort.

According to Osborne, "a whole host of other groups also face particular psychological challenges brought on by the crisis; children being kept out of school faced uncertainty and anxiety and it is vital that the



Your best weight is the weight you can live your happiest, healthiest and best life at. Step away from the scales. Let's not be too hard on ourselves...



schools remain open not just for education but for the social and psychological wellbeing of our children and young people. The elderly and those with pre-existing conditions face increased stress over the threat of infection.

"It is important to say that the social determinants of mental health are hugely significant and people from socially disadvantaged areas are more severely affected," he adds.

Commenting on ways people can look after their mental health, Osborne says that developing a regular structure to your day, keeping active and staying connected with friends and family can all help to improve feelings of security.

He also says there are some practical things people can do to mind their mental health, which include maintaining regular exercise and sleep routines, avoiding excess alcohol, and having a healthy balanced diet.

Finally Osborne advises that anyone who is concerned about their mental health should contact their GP. "General practice is open and GPs are available to ad-

dress concerns that patients may have," he says.

Feet

Being stuck at home or restricted to within a few kilometres of your house for daily exercise led to a number of people walking more or taking up running for the first time during lockdown. While any increased activity is great for your health, if you don't wear the proper running shoes while attempting your first "couch to 5K" your feet will suffer – something Joe Egan, a podiatrist in Blackrock, Co Dublin, has seen a lot of over the past two years.

He has seen an increase in blisters, heel pain, fallen arches and foot and ankle injuries as a result of ill-fitting running shoes.

However, for Egan, a council member of Podiatry Ireland, the Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists of Ireland, the biggest concern has been the impact of lockdowns on his patients with diabetes.

People with diabetes need to have regular check-ups of their feet to prevent a condition called diabetic neuropathy which, if left untreated, can, in extreme cases, lead

to amputation.

Egan says that during lockdown his diabetic patients were not attending for their regular check-ups and, as a result, he saw an increase in preventable diabetic foot ulcers and, sadly, digital (toe) amputations.

He says that in 2015-2020 there were a total of five digital amputations in his diabetic patients or about one a year. However, between 2020 to the end of this year there were four such amputations; two a year.

There were some positives for our feet thanks to the pandemic, however, particularly for women who, rather than having to wear uncomfortable high heels to the office could opt instead for comfortable trainers while working from home, which Egan says are better for your feet.

He advises that one of the best things you can do for your feet is to wear comfortable shoes.

"Make sure that your shoes are comfortable, that you are not in discomfort... if it's sore, it's sore for a reason," he says.

He also advises that people get their feet checked once a year by a registered podia-

■ According to the 2021 Healthy Ireland survey, almost three out of 10 people reported that their weight had increased during the pandemic. PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY

trist and if they have any issues with their feet to get them checked out.

As we return to hybrid working in the near future, Egan also advises that for those days that we are working from home to wear a good pair of runners, which he says should be treated as equally as important as the shoes you would wear in the office.

Heart

The pandemic has meant that many of us are working from home and, as a result, are sitting down for longer periods of time, which is not good news for your heart.

Last September, the European Society of Cardiology published new guidelines on the prevention of cardiovascular disease.

For the first time ever the guidelines recommended that people aim to reduce their sitting time and engage in at least light ac-

tivity throughout the day.

A significant percentage of the world-wide population, in particular the European population, shows high levels of sitting time and physical inactivity.

The Irish Heart Foundation has long highlighted the risks associated with increased sitting time and heart disease and stroke, and has worked to increase awareness of this risk factor through a number of public health awareness campaigns such as Escape Your Chair, which aims to inform and advise about the dangers of sitting down for too long.

A survey by the Irish Heart Foundation revealed that more than half of people working from home in Ireland as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions were sitting down for an average of two hours and 40 minutes longer per day.

Conducted by Ipsos MRBI in August 2020, the survey found that more than half of all workers in Ireland were working from home since restrictions began, with 53 per cent of them sitting down for longer than when in the office or their usual place of work.

It is recommended that we get 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity at least five days a week. However, this does not counteract the damage caused to our health by sitting for long periods of time.

The bottom line is that sitting down for too long can increase your risk of heart disease and stroke so make it a new year's resolution to sit less and move more in 2022.

The Irish Heart Foundation has also highlighted concerns that people suffering from heart attack or stroke have delayed presenting to hospital due to a number of factors such as a fear of contracting Covid, or not wanting to burden the health service.

It's important to remember that a heart attack or stroke is a medical emergency so do not delay in calling 999 immediately if you have any symptoms.

Eyes

If you have been wearing your face mask correctly for the past two years, your eyes should be the only thing that is visible on your face. While mask wearing is one of the cornerstones of Covid-19 prevention, they have had a previously unknown impact on our eye health.

John Weldon, president of Optometry Ireland (formerly the Association of Optometrists Ireland), says the biggest issue seen by optometrists as a result of the pandemic has been the emergence of a new condition called mask associated dry eye.

Weldon explains that when you wear a face mask, your hot breath is circulated behind the mask and some of it goes into your eyes. The many bacteria that live in our mouths and the hotness of the breath can cause ocular irritation and dryness of the eyes. He adds that optometrists are also seeing a higher number of eye infections in contact lens wearers since the beginning of



■ Clockwise from main: optometrist John Weldon has seen the emergence of a new condition called mask associated dry eye; dentist Dr Kieran O'Connor has noted an increase in teeth clenching; Dr Aoife Lally says there has been an increase in delayed skin cancer presentations as a result of the pandemic. PHOTOGRAPH: PATRICK BOLGER

the pandemic, which he suggests is also as a result of mask wearing.

Spending more time at home during the pandemic has also meant spending increasing time looking at screens both for work and for leisure, and while not unique to Covid, there has been a massive worldwide increase in the prevalence of short-sightedness or myopia, which studies have shown is linked to increasing screen use.

"If we hadn't been dealing with the worldwide pandemic of Covid, we would certainly be talking about the worldwide increase of myopia or short-sightedness," Weldon says.

In relation to looking after your eye health Weldon advises that everyone should get their eyes checked with their local optometrist.

He says the ergonomics of the home office are important, how the screen is set up, the lighting, and so on, as well as remembering to regularly interrupt our screen

time. He also says children were not brushing their teeth as much when schools were closed.

"Children love to brush their teeth before they go to school so when they weren't going to school, children weren't brushing their teeth in the morning."

Like other healthcare professionals, dentists have also seen the impact of lockdown on their patients' oral health, particularly in relation to delayed diagnoses leading to poorer outcomes. These include things like preventable extractions and oral cancers that would have been spotted earlier if it wasn't for some people's real fears of leaving home.

According to O'Connor, dentists have also seen an increase in the prevalence of teeth clenching and grinding as a result of stress, and this has been widely reported since the onset of the pandemic.

"People can get headaches, they can get discomfort in the jawline and then some people start cracking teeth," he says.

He advises people try to build in some structured relaxation time into their day for things like mindfulness or yoga, for example.

"All the things that are good for general wellbeing will help all that as well."

A rather unexpected side effect of working from home seen by dentists in the past two years has been an increase in demand for orthodontic and cosmetic treatments.

"Lots of people are spending their working day on Zoom or other platforms. They're looking at their smiles on the screen. They didn't do it before so certainly there has been an increase in demand for orthodontic treatment and cosmetic treatment," O'Connor says.

Asked for advice on ways to keep your smile healthy in the new year, O'Connor says we should try to minimise sugary snacks and if you are having them, then eat them with your main meal and not in between. This is because when you have a big meal you have a lot of saliva in your mouth, which clears the sugar more effectively. If you have a sweet in between meals, that sugar potentially stays in your mouth longer and increases your risk of decay, he explains.

He also advises that we treat ourselves to a new toothbrush in the new year.

"Change your toothbrush for the new year. Make sure your toothbrush is changed regularly, make sure that you spend time doing your tooth brushing, make it part of your routine," O'Connor says.

It is recommended that we spend two minutes brushing our teeth while others may need to take longer.

"In general terms if you spend two minutes, you will do a good job," he says.

Teeth

Any parent stuck at home during lockdown will remember the unrelenting demands for food and snacks from small children, they literally never stopped. Unfortunately, too many sugary snacks are bad news for kids' teeth.

Dr Kieran O'Connor is a dentist in Youghal, Co Cork, and vice-chairman of the General Practitioner Committee of the Irish Dental Association.

O'Connor says that earlier in the pandemic, when the restrictions kept us all at home and schools were closed, dentists ad-

Skin

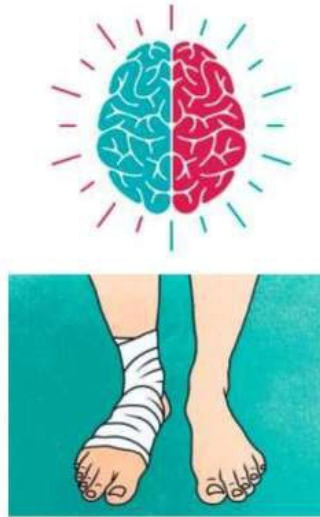
Apart from mask wearing, which some have suggested has resulted in a new skin condition called "maskne" (mask acne), the other big preventative measure in the fight against Covid-19 has been hand washing, which has also affected our skin.

According to Dr Aoife Lally, consultant dermatologist at St Vincent's University Hospital in Dublin, and associate professor at the School of Medicine at UCD, increased hand washing has led to an increase in hand dermatitis or eczema, particularly among healthcare workers, and this was a much bigger issue than maskne.

"Masks will make a lot of skin conditions worse, potentially. But very few people have to wear their masks all day, every day. It is a thing, but not something that I am seeing a tremendous amount of... But... anything where you have prolonged occlusion of the skin with a moist, warm environment, that can make certain conditions worse, such as eczema, such as acne, but I have only seen mild flares."

However, for Lally, a specialist in skin cancer, one of the biggest concerns she has seen are delayed skin cancer presentations as a result of the pandemic.

She says that as a result of people not seeking help for skin changes or being re-



■ The pandemic has created challenges for our bodies whether it be mental health, fitness, feet or eyes that are affected. PHOTOGRAPH: ISTOCK

luctant to contact their GP during the pandemic, they have been presenting with later more advanced disease.

"These tend to be older people who are a bit frail, and they generally take the guidelines very seriously. They have a fear

of coming in to hospitals, given their fear about Covid. And so I definitely think people are presenting with later stage tumours due to fear of Covid and because the referrals dropped off in the initial stages in 2020 we're still paying catch-up with

that... Certainly I am seeing people 18 months down the line who have had something very obvious on their skin that they have delayed getting attention with."


Most patients are seen in the rapid access skin cancer clinic in St Vincent's within six weeks. Therefore, Lally explains, patients are not waiting to be seen in the clinic, however they are delaying seeking attention.

"It means that their treatment is then a little more complex if they present a bit later: they have bigger surgery and they may need other treatments whereas if they present earlier, the surgery is usually more straightforward."

Lally says it is important for anyone who has any concerns about a changing skin lesion or any new lesion on their skin that looks different, also known as "the ugly duckling" sign (most normal moles on your body resemble one another, while melanomas stand out like ugly ducklings in comparison), to attend their GP who would then refer them on if appropriate.

According to Lally, the best thing you can do to improve the health of your skin is to wear sunscreen.

"Sunscreen, sunscreen, sunscreen, that's it... really we should all be wearing sunscreen all year round. Sun protection would be my big tip," she says.

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Date:	Saturday, January 8, 2022	Reach	710,600	
Page:	Link	Size (Sq. Cm)	3,491	

The pandemic body: How we have changed physically and what to do about it

15 min read From heart to eyes, weight, skin, mental health and teeth, the pandemic has affected our bodies significantly

From the so-called "Covid stone" to "mascne", the past two years have had an impact on our general health in more ways than one. While we stayed at home to protect ourselves, and the wider community, what impacts have the necessary public health restrictions had on our bodies, and what steps can we take to reverse the damage?

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According to the findings of the 2021 Healthy Ireland survey almost three out of 10 people (29 per cent) reported that their weight had increased during the pandemic, with weight increases reported most often by women aged over 30 and mothers.

The survey also revealed that 36 per cent of people reported consuming two or more unhealthy snack foods daily, with 24 per cent consuming one unhealthy snack on a daily basis.

Working from home meant that for most people the daily commute by foot from the train station or bus stop to the office was cut so our activity levels fell while at the same time we had 24/7 access to the fridge.

The pandemic also meant that some people were perhaps getting take-aways more often in a bid to support their local restaurants and, according to social media posts, a lot of banana bread and sour dough bread was baked.

Louise Reynolds is a registered dietitian and communications manager with the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute. She says that while our eating habits have changed as a result of the pandemic, as a dietitian the most important thing for her is that people have a healthy relationship with food.

'Your best weight is the weight you can live your happiest, healthiest and best life at. Let's step away from the scales. Let's not be too hard on ourselves'

"The whole cycle of beating ourselves up if we put on a little bit of weight and then going on a really strict crash diet and maybe losing a few pounds but then going back to you know, overeating. That's not sustainable and it doesn't make you feel good," she says.

Reynolds says the pandemic has been "a huge challenge" for everybody, and it is best not to add another challenge in the mix by pressurising ourselves to be a particular weight.

Instead, she suggests that for the new year to try to be "your best weight".

"Your best weight is the weight you can live your happiest, healthiest and best life at. Let's step away from the scales. Let's not be too hard on ourselves... the conversations around weight, let's not have those in front of our children. Ideally, let's not have those conversations at all. You know, because we all know what we should do. But it's putting pressure on people."

For the new year, Reynolds suggests making some simple positive changes. For example, looking at things we could eat more of, such as fruit and vegetables. She also suggests cutting back on meat and having one or two plant-based meals a week, which as well as being good for your health is also good for the planet.

Mental health

The 2021 Healthy Ireland survey revealed that 81 per cent of people reported feeling less socially connected due to the Covid restrictions. This was common among all age groups, although those aged 45-54 and women were more likely to be affected. Furthermore, 30 per cent of those surveyed reported a worsening of their mental health since the start of the pandemic.

General practice has been at the coalface of the pandemic from day one, and the vast majority of people with mental health difficulties are treated successfully in primary care.

Dr Brian Osborne is a GP in Galway and assistant medical director with the Irish College of General Practitioners.

He says the Covid-19 crisis has had “profound economic, social and educational impacts”.

“General practice is seeing at first hand the effects of the pandemic on the mental health of the population. Grief, financial loss, being out of work for the first time and isolation are major events in the lives of people. Individuals are presenting with increased levels of stress, irritability and poor sleep. Patients are presenting more commonly with loneliness, anxiety and depression,” he explains.

Coupled with people presenting with new onset anxiety and depression, Osborne says GPs are also seeing people with enduring mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, experiencing more serious relapses.

'It is important to say that the social determinants of mental health are hugely significant and people from socially disadvantaged areas are more severely affected'

He adds that while the pandemic has affected the mental health of all age groups, in his experience, young people in their late teens and early 20s have been particularly negatively impacted, with increased presentations of anxiety, depression and eating disorders seen in this cohort.

According to Osborne, “a whole host of other groups also face particular psychological challenges brought on by the crisis; children being kept out of school faced uncertainty and anxiety and it is vital that the schools remain open not just for education but for the social and psychological wellbeing of our children and young people. The elderly and those with pre-existing conditions face increased stress over the threat of infection.

“It is important to say that the social determinants of mental health are hugely significant and people from socially disadvantaged areas are more severely affected,” he adds.

Commenting on ways people can look after their mental health, Osborne says that developing a regular structure to your day, keeping active and staying connected with friends and family can all help to improve feelings of security.

He also says there are some practical things people can do to mind their mental health, which include maintaining regular exercise and sleep routines, avoiding excess alcohol, and having a healthy balanced diet.

Finally Osborne advises that anyone who is concerned about their mental health should contact their GP. “General practice is open and GPs are available to address concerns that patients may have,” he says.

Feet

Being stuck at home or restricted to within a few kilometres of your house for daily exercise led to a number of people walking more or taking up running for the first time during lockdown. While any increased activity is great for your health, if you don't wear the proper running shoes while attempting your first “couch to 5K” your feet will suffer – something Joe Egan , a podiatrist in Blackrock, Co Dublin , has seen a lot of over the past two years.

He has seen an increase in blisters, heel pain, fallen arches and foot and ankle injuries as a result of ill-fitting running shoes.

However, for Egan, a council member of Podiatry Ireland, the Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists of Ireland, the biggest concern has been the impact of lockdowns on his patients with diabetes.

People with diabetes need to have regular check-ups of their feet to prevent a condition called diabetic neuropathy which, if left untreated, can, in extreme cases, lead to amputation.

Egan says that during lockdown his diabetic patients were not attending for their regular check-ups and, as a result, he saw an increase in preventable diabetic foot ulcers and, sadly, digital (toe) amputations.

Optometrist John Weldon says a result of the pandemic has been the emergence of a new condition called mask associated dry eye

He says that in 2015-2020 there were a total of five digital amputations in his diabetic patients or about one a year. However, between 2020 to the end of this year there were four such amputations; two a year.

There were some positives for our feet thanks to the pandemic, however, particularly for women who, rather than having to wear uncomfortable high heels to the office could opt instead for comfortable trainers while working from home, which Egan says are better for your feet.

He advises that one of the best things you can do for your feet is to wear comfortable shoes.

“Make sure that your shoes are comfortable, that you are not in discomfort... if it's sore, it's sore for a reason,” he says.

He also advises that people get their feet checked once a year by a registered podiatrist and if they have any issues with their feet to get them checked out.

As we return to hybrid working in the near future, Egan also advises that for those days that we are working from home to wear a good pair of runners, which he says should be treated as equally as important as the shoes you would wear in the office.

Heart

The pandemic has meant that many of us are working from home and, as a result, are sitting down for longer periods of time, which is not good news for your heart.

Last September, the European Society of Cardiology published new guidelines on the prevention of cardiovascular disease.

For the first time ever the guidelines recommended that people aim to reduce their sitting time and engage in at least light activity throughout the day.

A significant percentage of the worldwide population, in particular the European population, shows high levels of sitting time and physical inactivity.

The Irish Heart Foundation has long highlighted the risks associated with increased sitting time and heart disease and stroke, and has worked to increase awareness of this risk factor through a number of public health awareness campaigns such as Escape Your Chair, which aims to inform and advise about the dangers of sitting down for too long.

A survey by the Irish Heart Foundation revealed that more than half of people working from home in Ireland as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions were sitting down for an average of two hours and 40 minutes longer per day.

Youghal dentist Dr Kieran O'Connor has seen an increase in the prevalence of teeth clenching and grinding as a result of stress, and this has been widely reported since the onset of the pandemic. Photograph: SON Photographic Ltd

Conducted by Ipsos MRBI in August 2020, the survey found that more than half of all workers in Ireland were working from home since restrictions began, with 53 per cent of them sitting down for longer than when in the office or their usual place of work.

It is recommended that we get 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity at least five days a week. However, this does not counteract the damage caused to our health by sitting for long periods of time.

The bottom line is that sitting down for too long can increase your risk of heart disease and stroke so make it a new year's resolution to sit less and move more in 2022.

The Irish Heart Foundation has also highlighted concerns that people suffering from heart attack or stroke have delayed presenting to hospital due to a number of factors such as a fear of contracting Covid, or not wanting to burden the health service.

It's important to remember that a heart attack or stroke is a medical emergency so do not delay in calling 999 immediately if you have any symptoms.

Eyes

If you have been wearing your face mask correctly for the past two years, your eyes should be the only thing that is visible on your face. While mask wearing is one of the cornerstones of Covid-19 prevention, they have had a previously unknown impact on our eye health.

John Weldon, president of Optometry Ireland (formerly the Association of Optometrists Ireland), says the biggest issue seen by optometrists as a result of the pandemic has been the emergence of a new condition called mask associated dry eye.

Weldon explains that when you wear a face mask, your hot breath is circulated behind the mask and some of it goes into your eyes. The many bacteria that live in our mouths and the hotness of the breath can cause ocular irritation and dryness of the eyes. He adds that optometrists are also seeing a higher number of eye infections in contact lens wearers since the beginning of the pandemic, which he suggests is also as a result of mask wearing.

Spending more time at home during the pandemic has also meant spending increasing time looking at screens both for work and for leisure, and while not unique to Covid, there has been a massive worldwide increase in the prevalence of short-sightedness or myopia, which studies have shown is linked to increasing screen use.

For Dr Aoife Lally, a specialist in skin cancer, one of the biggest concerns she has seen are delayed skin cancer presentations as a result of the pandemic. Photograph: Patrick Bolger Photography

"If we hadn't been dealing with the worldwide pandemic of Covid, we would certainly be talking about the worldwide increase of myopia or short-sightedness," Weldon says.

In relation to looking after your eye health Weldon advises that everyone should get their eyes checked with their local optometrist.

He says the ergonomics of the home office are important, how the screen is set up, the lighting, and so on, as well as remembering to regularly interrupt our screen time.

He advises that a handy mnemonic to remember is 20/20/20/20 whereby every 20 minutes while you are working, you should take 20 seconds, blink 20 times and try to refocus on something 20m away. This interrupts the task and allows the eyes to refocus.

Teeth

Any parent stuck at home during lockdown will remember the unrelenting demands for food and snacks from small children, they literally never stopped. Unfortunately, too many sugary snacks are bad news for kids' teeth.

Dr Kieran O'Connor is a dentist in Youghal, Co Cork, and vice-chairman of the General Practitioner Committee of

O'Connor says that earlier in the pandemic, when the restrictions kept us all at home and schools were closed, dentists advised on the importance of "keeping social distance from the treat cupboard", in an effort to reduce the amount of sugar children were eating, to protect their teeth and gums.

He also says children were not brushing their teeth as much when schools were closed.

"Children love to brush their teeth before they go to school so when they weren't going to school, children weren't brushing their teeth in the morning."

'Change your toothbrush for the new year. Make sure your toothbrush is changed regularly'

Like other healthcare professionals, dentists have also seen the impact of lockdown on their patients' oral health, particularly in relation to delayed diagnoses leading to poorer outcomes. These include things like preventable extractions and oral cancers that would have been spotted earlier if it wasn't for some people's real fears of leaving home.

According to O'Connor, dentists have also seen an increase in the prevalence of teeth clenching and grinding as a result of stress, and this has been widely reported since the onset of the pandemic.

"People can get headaches, they can get discomfort in the jawline and then some people start cracking teeth," he says.

He advises people try to build in some structured relaxation time into their day for things like mindfulness or yoga, for example.

"All the things that are good for general wellbeing will help all that as well."

A rather unexpected side effect of working from home seen by dentists in the past two years has been an increase in demand for orthodontic and cosmetic treatments.

"Lots of people are spending their working day on Zoom or other platforms. They're looking at their smiles on the screen. They didn't do it before so certainly there has been an increase in demand for orthodontic treatment and cosmetic treatment," O'Connor says.

For Dr Aoife Lally, a specialist in skin cancer, one of the biggest concerns she has seen are delayed skin cancer presentations as a result of the pandemic

Asked for advice on ways to keep your smile healthy in the new year, O'Connor says we should try to minimise sugary snacks and if you are having them, then eat them with your main meal and not in between. This is because when you have a big meal you have a lot of saliva in your mouth, which clears the sugar more effectively. If you have a sweet in between meals, that sugar potentially stays in your mouth longer and increases your risk of decay, he explains.

He also advises that we treat ourselves to a new toothbrush in the new year.

"Change your toothbrush for the new year. Make sure your toothbrush is changed regularly, make sure that you spend time doing your tooth brushing, make it part of your routine," O'Connor says.

It is recommended that we spend two minutes brushing our teeth while others may need to take longer.

"In general terms if you spend two minutes, you will do a good job," he says.

Skin

Apart from mask wearing, which some have suggested has resulted in a new skin condition called "mascne" (mask acne), the other big preventative measure in the fight against Covid-19 has been hand washing, which has also affected our skin.

According to Dr Aoife Lally, consultant dermatologist at St Vincent's University Hospital in Dublin, and associate professor at the School of Medicine at University College Dublin, increased hand washing has led to an increase in hand dermatitis or eczema, particularly among healthcare workers, and this was a much bigger issue than mascne.

"Masks will make a lot of skin conditions worse, potentially. But very few people have to wear their masks all day, every day. It is a thing, but not something that I am seeing a tremendous amount of... But... anything where you have prolonged occlusion of the skin with a moist, warm environment, that can make certain conditions worse, such as eczema, such as acne, but I have only seen mild flares."

However, for Lally, a specialist in skin cancer, one of the biggest concerns she has seen are delayed skin cancer presentations as a result of the pandemic.

She says that as a result of people not seeking help for skin changes or being reluctant to contact their GP during the pandemic, they have been presenting with later more advanced disease.

'Sunscreen, sunscreen, sunscreen, that's it... really we should all be wearing sunscreen all year round. Sun protection would be my big tip'

"These tend to be older people who are a bit frail, and they generally take the guidelines very seriously. They have a fear of coming in to hospitals, given their fear about Covid. And so I definitely think people are presenting

with later stage tumours due to fear of Covid and because the referrals dropped off in the initial stages in 2020 we're still paying catch-up with that... Certainly I am seeing people 18 months down the line who have had something very obvious on their skin that they have delayed getting attention with."

Most patients are seen in the rapid access skin cancer clinic in St Vincent's within six weeks. Therefore, Lally explains, patients are not waiting to be seen in the clinic, however they are delaying seeking attention.

"It means that their treatment is then a little more complex if they present a bit later: they have bigger surgery and they may need other treatments whereas if they present earlier, the surgery is usually more straightforward."

Lally says it is important for anyone who has any concerns about a changing skin lesion or any new lesion on their skin that looks different, also known as "the ugly duckling" sign (most normal moles on your body resemble one another, while melanomas stand out like ugly ducklings in comparison), to attend their GP who would then refer them on if appropriate.

According to Lally, the best thing you can do to improve the health of your skin is to wear sunscreen.

"Sunscreen, sunscreen, sunscreen, that's it... really we should all be wearing sunscreen all year round. Sun protection would be my big tip," she says.

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Lack of dentists not just a Limerick issue

Not enough dentists are being produced in Ireland to meet the demand both nationally and locally. There have been significant delays in getting dental appointments in Limerick since the beginning of the pandemic.

This is being largely put down to restrictions on the sector in the past two years and the waiting lists that have accrued as a result.

But Fintan Hourihan from the [Irish Dental Association](#) says there aren't enough places in dental schools in Ireland either.