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1 October 2024

Deputy Steven Matthews, TD

Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Re Ref: 37094/24 **To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the withdrawal of a senior post (Wicklow Senior Special Care Dentist post - CHO6); if he is concerned about the potential knock-on impact of this in the area; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Matthews.

I have been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted for response.

The Senior Dental Surgeon Special Needs post in CH East was recently approved and offered to an existing panel. The post was not accepted and was re-advertised by local recruitment on 01 October 2024. It is hoped that this position will be filled within the next couple of months.

The Dental Service has advised that any delay filling this post may result in:

- Delayed screening and treatment for children in special schools and ASD units in national schools, children with cleft lip and palate and other medically compromised children referred from Children's Health Ireland (CHI) for regular recall.
- Delayed screening and treatment of vulnerable adults with medical cards who cannot access treatment through the DTSS scheme particularly special needs adult patients with physical, medical and intellectual disabilities including those in residential care.
- Delayed treatment for international protection/asylum seeker and refugee patients who require dental care and are not immediately eligible to access care under the DTSS while awaiting medical cards.
- Increased workload for general dentists currently in post, an increase in emergency attendance which could impact on the delivery of the school screening service.

Please contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely

Siobhan Young
Head of Service for Primary Care