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Eluned Morgan MS,
Minister for Health and Social Care,
Welsh Government,
Via email

10/02/2022

REF: CO/JFS/TM

Private & Confidential

Re: North Wales Dental care

Dear Minister, Eluned,

I hope this letter finds you and your team well. I am writing to raise my serious concerns regarding the current provision of dental care in Aberconwy, which is seeing growing waiting times and individuals with dental concerns struggling to access the care they require.

As I am sure you are aware The British Dental Association (BDA) raised concerns last summer about the NHS budget for dentistry, highlighting that there has been a 15% budget cut. Effectively, this reduction has made it more difficult for practice owners to keep their books balanced and to recruit associates to undertake NHS work. According to the BDA it appears that without private practice to supplement their budgets, many practices would be running at a loss with only NHS work.

The stark warning appears to have become reality in Aberconwy. In correspondence with a local dental practice, I was informed that at the time they were expecting to see their number of NHS dentists reduce from their usual 5 to just a single clinician. While this particular practice was making every effort to recruit additional clinicians, they were experiencing significant difficulties in recruiting dentists in the North Wales area.

This situation is leaving my constituents and the people of Aberconwy unable to access routine NHS dental care to the detriment of their dental health, with residents informing me of their dental appointments being re-arranged or cancelled at the last minute up to four times over several months. This unacceptable situation is forcing a number of residents to seek the care they require in the private sector, which given the cost of living crisis which we are currently experiencing in Wales, many can ill afford.

[Continued overleaf].



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Given this, I am writing to urge you and the Welsh Government to take bold and decisive action to address this matter, to drive up recruitment in North Wales, to support NHS dentistry and to encourage more students to study and train in the sector. While I welcome the addition funding announced in November aimed at expediting the recovery of services, it is clear that clarity is needed as to where this money has been spent and what immediate action will be taken to relieve the pressure on NHS dentists across Wales.

I thank you for your attention to this matter and would welcome further discussion and dialog with you on this matter so that the people of Wales can access the dental care and treatment which they need and deserve.

Yours sincerely,

Janet Finch-Saunders MS/AS