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**Minister for Social and Family Affairs  
Mary Coughlan TD invites the Irish Dental Association  
to talks**

The Minister for Social and Family Affairs has invited the Irish Dental Association to meet with her early next week to discuss the urgent establishment of an independent review in a bid to resolve the current dispute.

”I am appealing directly to the Irish Dental Association to meet with me in a bid to resolve this dispute by establishing an independent review, and would welcome their earliest agreement to this proposal.

”My officials have always been available to meet with the Irish Dental Association, but I now propose meeting with the association early next week to establish a review of the dental scheme – and to set a reporting timescale for the group.

”I am concerned that members of the public have been inconvenienced by the withdrawal of some members of the Irish Dental Association from the dental scheme.

”I would pay tribute to those dentists who are still honouring their contracts with the Department of Social and Family Affairs, and members of the public can be put in contact with a dentist operating the scheme in their locality by ringing my Department’s locall number 1890 400 400extension 4480.

”I look forward to an early response from the Irish Dental Association to my proposal,” said Minister Coughlan.

Ends  
23<sup>rd</sup> January 2003