

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Henrietta Campbell CB



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

An Roinn

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

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URGENT COMMUNICATION

HSS(MD)10/2005

To:
All General Practitioners
Chief Executives, HSS Boards & Trusts
Medical Directors, HSS Trusts – *for onward dissemination
to all Consultants*

Nursing Directors, HSS Boards & Trusts
Directors of Public Health, HSS Boards
Consultants in Communicable Disease Control, HSS
Boards
Directors of Pharmacy, HSS Boards & Trusts
Directors of Primary Care, HSS Boards
Dr P McClements, NI Prison Service
Dr J Mairs, Regional Procurement Pharmacist

Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast BT4 3SQ
Tel: 028 9052 0563
Fax: 028 9052 0574
Email: Henrietta.Campbell@dhsspsni.gov.uk

Your Ref:
Our Ref: HSS(MD)10/2005
Date: 2nd March 2005

Dear Colleague

INFLUENZA PANDEMIC CONTINGENCY PLAN

The Northern Ireland Interim Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan is now available on the DHSSPS website at <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/phealth/pandemic-flu.asp> . The Plan outlines the DHSSPS contingency arrangements for the occurrence of an influenza pandemic. It complements the UK Health Department's Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan which was published on 1st March 2005.

Northern Ireland Interim Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan

This Plan provides background information on pandemic influenza, details of the planning assumptions underpinning contingency planning and clarity on responsibilities before, during and after a pandemic. It also provides a framework for the Health & Social Services Boards, Health & Social Services Trusts, and associated agencies to update and develop their own more detailed local plans for dealing with an influenza pandemic.

Detailed actions are specified for each of the relevant agencies at each phase of the pandemic. Although DHSSPS will lead on the overall regional management of a pandemic in Northern Ireland and will be responsible for United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland liaison there are clear requirements for Boards, Trusts and others for local action. It should be noted that this Plan will be kept regularly under review as the situation in relation to the emergence of a pandemic develops. Together with the other UK Health Departments the Department receives regular communications from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and will update the Plan as required if new information is received.

Comments on the Plan are welcome and should be sent to nifluplan@dhsspsni.gov.uk (operational from 8th March 2005).

UK Health Department's Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan

This Plan was produced together with the Health Departments of the other UK countries and seeks to reduce the health impact of a pandemic and the possible disruption it may cause to essential services and peoples daily lives. The document provides a framework for an integrated UK-wide response to an influenza pandemic. It is based on the framework currently recommended by the World Health Organisation for National Pandemic Plans. It can be downloaded from the Department of Health (London) website at www.publications.doh.gov.uk/pandemicflu/

Pandemic Influenza

Pandemics of influenza have swept the world every few decades including three times in the last century. Each pandemic has caused wide spread illness and a large number of deaths. There is currently increasing concern that a new influenza virus with pandemic potential will emerge given the situation in relation to Avian Influenza in South East Asia and WHO are advising that a further pandemic can be expected. It is estimated that up to 25% of the population could be affected and 1% of the population could die from pandemic flu. There are usually one or more waves of a pandemic, each lasting around three months, over two to three years.

The HPSS is likely to be severely affected if Northern Ireland is included in an influenza pandemic. It is thus essential that all Boards and Trusts have up-to-date contingency plans for dealing with the impact of an influenza pandemic. I would urge you to visit both the Northern Ireland Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan and the UK Health Department's Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan to ensure that the actions outlined in these plans are reflected in your own plans.

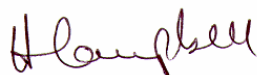
Further advice on the content of this circular may be obtained from the following:

Dr Lorraine Doherty
Senior Medical Officer/
Consultant Epidemiologist

Tel: 028 90 520717

E-mail: lorraine.doherty@dhsspsni.gov.uk

Yours sincerely



Dr Henrietta Campbell
Chief Medical Officer

cc: Mr C Gowdy, Permanent Secretary, DHSSPS
Dr E Mitchell, Principal Medical Officer, DHSSPS
Mrs D Kenny, Director of Health Development, DHSSPS
Dr L Doherty, Senior Medical Officer/Consultant Epidemiologist
Dr K Booth, Medical Adviser in Primary Care, DHSSPS
Dr Jim Livingstone, Director Primary Care DHSSPS
Mr P Maguire, Information Office, DHSSPS
Mr G Dorrian, Health Protection Team, DHSSPS
Regional Epidemiologists, CDSC(NI)
Mr J Martin, EMART
Influenza/Pneumococcal Working Group Committee

This letter is available at www.dhsspsni.gov.uk and also on the DHSSPS Extranet which can be accessed directly at <http://extranet.dhsspsni.gov.uk> or by going through the HPSS Web at <http://www.n-i.nhs.uk> and clicking on DHSSPS.