From the Chief Medical Officer Dr Michael McBride



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HSS(MD)10/2008

Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí

MÄNNYSTRIE O

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Your Ref:

Our Ref: HSS(MD)10/2008 Date: 18 March 2008

To: Chief Executives of Trusts

Chief Executives of Boards Medical Directors of Trusts Directors of Public Health

Consultants in Communicable Disease Control

David Marshall, NISRA Sandy Fitzpatrick, CSA

Dear Colleague,

ENHANCED MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEATHS WHERE C.DIFFICILE OR MRSA INFECTION IS MENTIONED ON THE DEATH CERTIFICATE

- I am writing to confirm the arrangements which have been agreed between the Department and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), Central Services Agency (CSA) and the Medical Director in each of the Trusts in relation to monitoring of deaths where C.difficile or MRSA infection is mentioned on the death certificate.
- 2. As of 1 April 2008 new arrangements will come into place which (i) will support Trusts in their ability to monitor deaths occurring in their Trust where these important Healthcare Associated Infections are mentioned on the death certificate and (ii) for more frequent regional reporting of deaths where these infections are mentioned on the death certificate.
- 3. Deaths are registered by the General Registrar Office on receipt of information from District Registration Offices or the Coroner's Office. The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) obtain information from these death certificates in relation to whether C.difficile or MRSA has been mentioned on the death certificate or has been described as an underlying cause of death. It should be noted that most deaths are registered within 5 days, however it may take up to 10 days for some deaths to be registered. To date NISRA have analysed this data on an annual basis and produced an Annual Report.



- 4. From 1 April 2008 NISRA will provide weekly unvalidated data from these death certificates where C.difficile or MRSA is mentioned on the death certificate or described as an underlying cause to the Central Services Agency. The Central Services Agency will share this data with Medical Directors in the Belfast, Northern, Southern, South Eastern and Western Health and Social Care Trusts.
- 5. Medical Directors are to establish a protocol within their Trusts for checking the data received from CSA against the information they hold on C.difficile and MRSA cases and deaths within their Trust. Medical Directors are requested to submit details of these protocols to the Department to Dr Lorraine Doherty, Room C3.16, Castle Buildings, Stormont, Belfast, BT4 3SQ or at lorraine.doherty@dhsspsni.gov.uk by 31 March 2008.
- NISRA have agreed to undertake more frequent reporting of deaths registered in Northern Ireland with Clostridium Difficile or MRSA mentioned on the death certificate. Previously data was reported annually, validated data will now be reported every quarter.
- 7. Medical Directors are reminded that I recently issued guidance on death certification in the context of healthcare associated infections http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/hssmd-3-2008.pdf. Medical Directors are urged to ensure that every doctor in their Trust is made fully aware of this Guidance. In addition where a junior doctor is completing the death certificate in the case of C.difficile or MRSA this should be discussed with a senior colleague, ie Consultant.

Yours sincerely

DR MICHAEL McBRIDE Chief Medical Officer

Audrail Myhrich

Cc CNO
Dr Mitchell
Dr Harper
Dr Doherty
Seamus Camplisson
Tracy Power

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