

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride

HSS(MD)61/2020



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

Chief Executive, Public Health Agency (*for onward cascade to all relevant Public Health, Nursing and Midwifery Staff*)

Chief Executives HSC Trusts (*for onward cascade to all relevant staff including Directors of Laboratory Services and Maternity Services*)

Directors of Nursing (*for onward distribution to midwifery, health visiting and obstetric staff*)

Medical Directors (*for onward distribution to all microbiology staff*)

Chief Executive HSCB (*for onward distribution to GP Medical Advisers*)

All General Practitioners and GP Locums (*for onward distribution to relevant practice staff*)

Chief Executive, Clinical Education Centre Chief Executive NIPEC

Professor Sonja McIlpatrick, Head of School of Nursing at University of Ulster

Professor Donna Fitzsimons, Head of School of Nursing QUB

Donna Gallagher, Open University

Chief Executive NIMDTA

Castle Buildings
Stormont
BELFAST
BT4 3SQ

Tel: 028 9052 0563

Email: michael.mcbride@health-ni.gov.uk

Your Ref:

Our Ref: HSS(MD)61/2020

Date: 19 August 2020

Dear Colleagues

FOR ACTION: HEALTHCARE SAFETY INVESTIGATION BRANCH NATIONAL LEARNING REPORT - SEVERE BRAIN INJURY, EARLY NEONATAL DEATH AND INTRAPARTUM STILLBIRTH ASSOCIATED WITH GROUP B STREPTOCOCCUS INFECTION - JULY 2020

On 16 July, the Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch (HSIB) in England published the report above. A copy of the full report can be accessed at:

<https://www.hsib.org.uk/investigations-cases/group-b-streptococcus-infection/national-learning-report/>

Background

The HSIB was established by the Department of Health and Social Care in 2017 to conduct independent investigations of patient safety concerns in NHS-funded care in England. The purpose of the HSIB maternity programme is to achieve rapid learning and improvement in maternity services, and to identify common themes that offer opportunity for system-wide change.

The HSIB reviewed 296 maternity investigations which met criteria for the RCOG 'Each Baby Counts programme' and identified 15 babies where group B streptococcus (GBS) infection was identified as a factor that contributed to severe brain injury, intrapartum stillbirth or early neonatal death. Analysis of these 15 incidents identified learning in relation to antenatal, intra partum and post-partum care.

You will be aware that there has been considerable work carried out across HSC over a number of years to improve the care of pregnant women at risk of GBS and babies who are affected by GBS. In November 2019 Chief Executives were asked to review local protocols and practice and, where required, take appropriate action to ensure that guidance issued in 2017 has been fully implemented.

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/hss-md-29-2019.pdf>

Action

We are now writing to ask the PHA and Trusts to work with partners through the Maternity Collaborative and NI Neonatal Network to consider the report of the HSIB and take forward any further improvement action required.

Yours sincerely



Dr Michael McBride
Chief Medical Officer



Professor Charlotte McArdle
Chief Nursing Officer

Director of Public Health/Medical Director, Public Health Agency (*for onward distribution to all relevant health protection staff*)

Assistant Director Public Health (Health Protection), Public Health Agency

Director of Nursing, Public Health Agency

Assistant Director of Pharmacy and Medicines Management, Health and Social Care Board (*for onward distribution to Community Pharmacies*)

Directors of Pharmacy HSC Trusts

Director of Social Care and Children, HSCB

Family Practitioner Service Leads, Health and Social Care Board (*for cascade to GP Out of Hours services*)

Directors of Children's Services, HSC Trusts

RQIA (*for onward transmission to all independent providers including independent hospitals*)

Medicines Management Pharmacists, HSC Board (*for cascade to prescribing advisers*)
Regional Medicines Information Service, Belfast HSC Trust
Regional Pharmaceutical Procurement Service, Northern HSC Trust
Professor Paul McCarron, Head of School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, UU
Professor Carmel Hughes, Head of School, School of Pharmacy, QUB
Professor Colin Adair, Director of the NI Centre for Pharmacy Learning and Development, QUB
Joe Brogan, Assistant Director of Integrated Care, HSCB
Michael Donaldson, HSCB (*for distribution to all General Dental Practitioners*)
Raymond Curran, Head of Ophthalmic Services, HSCB (*for distribution to Community Optometrists*)
Trade Union Side

This letter is available on the Department of Health website at
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/professional-medical-and-environmental-health-advice/hssmd-letters-and-urgent-communications>