

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride



HSS(MD) 3/2019

For Action:

Chief Executive PHA (*for onward cascade to all relevant Public Health Staff*)

Chief Executives HSC Trusts (*for onward cascade to all relevant 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, RQIA (*for onward transmission to all independent providers including independent hospitals*)

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Your Ref:
Our Ref: HSS(MD) 3/2019
Date: 26 February 2019

Dear Colleague

ANTENATAL SCREENING FOR RUBELLA SUSCEPTIBILITY

ACTION REQUIRED

Chief Executives should ensure relevant health professionals are aware that the offer of antenatal screening for rubella susceptibility is to continue for all pregnant women in Northern Ireland.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this letter is provide clarity on a recent update to the NICE Clinical Guideline CG 62 on Antenatal Care (2008) that was forwarded to the HSC by the Department of Health in Northern Ireland on 6 February. This update included the removal of recommendation 1.8.8.1 on antenatal screening for rubella susceptibility, on the basis that this is no longer offered on the NHS in England. This is not the policy position in Northern Ireland.
2. The advice given in my letter HSS (MD) 15/2016 on the prevention of congenital rubella infection in Northern Ireland is that antenatal screening for rubella susceptibility is to continue for all pregnant women in Northern Ireland and the position would be reviewed in three years' time. I wish to confirm this advice still stands as I am aware the NICE update notification has created some confusion.

Action Required

3. Chief Executives should ensure relevant health professionals are aware that the offer of antenatal screening for rubella susceptibility is to continue for all pregnant women in Northern Ireland.
4. The policy position on antenatal screening for rubella susceptibility will be reviewed this year and that following this review, new guidance will be issued by the Department to the HSC.

Yours sincerely



Dr Michael McBride
Chief Medical Officer

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>

CIRCULATION LIST

Executive Medical Director/Director of Public Health/, Public Health Agency
Assistant Director Public Health (Screening), Public Health Agency
Director of Nursing, Public Health Agency
Medical Directors, HSC Trusts
Directors of Nursing, HSC Trusts
Director of Integrated Care, HSCB
Assistant Director of Pharmacy and Medicines Management, Health & Social
Care Board, *(for onward distribution to all Community Pharmacies)*
Directors of Pharmacy HSC Trusts
Head of School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Science, QUB
Post Graduate Dean Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency
Director of Postgraduate General Practice Education, NIMDTA
Dean of Life and Health Sciences, University of Ulster
Head of School of Nursing and Midwifery, QUB
Head of School of Nursing, University of Ulster (UU)
Regional Medicines Information Service, Belfast HSC Trust
Regional Pharmaceutical Procurement Service, Northern HSC Trust