

## Foreword

Dear Colleague,

By the time you receive this Newsletter it will be well into the summer holiday period and perhaps you feel a relaxation in your daily routine. In the Department we value this time which has far fewer meetings and, for me, less travelling. It gives us time to catch up or chase up some of the smaller projects which often become lost in the big work areas. It also gives a bit of "thinking time" and space to plan ahead.

Maybe the cross infection audit has highlighted areas in your practice which need updating over the next couple of years. I hope you will view the Practice Improvement Initiative and the Practice Allowance money as some help towards meeting these increased standards. This money is recurrent so it should help to phase in improvements.

We will be interested to see the uptake of the new item of service - fissure sealant. Are practices interested in taking on children and helping to improve oral health? Are there other preventative

measures which we could expand through general practice? We have some ideas of our own but would be interested to hear if you have any. Use our e-mail link to contact us.

I hope that you leave your Newsletter in the practice so that other staff can read it and I would draw your attention especially at this time to the details of dental nurse training, on the back page.

Northern Ireland has a good record of attendances at dental nurse courses and examinations - over 160 nurses for the National exam last month. As I keep saying - get on the voluntary register now and then there will be no panic when the GDC opens the PC register. You could use some of your practice allowance money to encourage your unqualified staff to get those exams.

Remember - your staff are as important an investment as your equipment!

Regards,  
Doreen Wilson  
Chief Dental Officer  
June 2005

## Cross Infection Control Audit

The cross infection control audit carried out earlier this year yielded a 100% response rate from general dental practitioners across the 4 Boards. The results have now been analysed and reported on by the working team headed up by Dr Caroline Pankhurst (Senior Lecturer, Oral Microbiology, GKT, London) and Dr Wil Coulter (Consultant Oral Microbiologist, School of Dentistry, Belfast) and have been passed back to the Health Boards from where the audits were received.

The following are some of the main priority areas that have been identified in the analysis of the audits:

- Amalgam separators: these are now required to be fitted in all practices to comply with disposal of toxic waste legislation.
- Chart recorders for autoclaves: Nearly 60% of practices did not have a chart recorder fitted. Chart recorders are necessary to fulfil the requirement that every production cycle must be fully documented.

- Independent water bottles: 40% of practices did not have independent water supply and this is necessary to prevent back-siphonage into the mains water supply and assists the delivery of antimicrobials to control growth of biofilm in waterlines.
- Dedicated rooms with sinks and extraction ventilation for washing and sterilisation of instruments: Almost 70% of practices currently do not have this facility which, though not essential, would be the preferred option where possible.
- Washer disinfectors: the majority of practices currently do not possess washer disinfectors, although they are now recommended by the Medical & Healthcare products Regulatory Authority (MHRA) and the BDA (A12), as automated washing is more consistent than manual cleaning and can be validated.
- Disposables: Burs, endodontic files and matrix bands can be difficult to decontaminate and greater use of disposable items will reduce the risk of cross infection.

In order to address some of the issues raised from the audit, the Department has stipulated that practitioners should use their practice improvement allocations to target those areas which their audit has highlighted as requiring improvement and are achievable in the short term.

The next stage in the process is a programme of intensive training focussed on the areas requiring improvement revealed by the audit over the next twelve months. Dr Wil Coulter and his team propose to run nine one-day workshops across the province to enable one dentist and one dental nurse from each practice to attend. The Postgraduate Dental Dean, Dr David Hussey, has agreed that NIMDTA will fund and facilitate four of these workshops and the Department and Boards are currently attempting to source funding for the remaining workshops.

As part of this training programme, Dr Pankhurst, Dr Coulter and team have developed a very comprehensive Cross Infection Manual and CD Rom, which they hope will complement the training programme.

# Claims to Record Checks (CRC)

## Background

Following the cessation of Positive Assurance on 1 July 2004, a dental sub-group of the Regional Probity and Counter Fraud Steering Group was tasked with developing a new system that would, satisfy the requirement to assure the spend on the GDS and be acceptable to the profession. There was broad representation from all the key stakeholders on this sub group and included general dental practitioners from the four Local Dental Committees, Dental Directors from the 4 HSSBs, Dental staff from the CSA, Dental staff from the Department and Finance staff from the Boards and Department.

The group first met in July 2004 and continued to meet regularly through to May 2005. After extensive scoping of the current monitoring arrangements, lessons learned from the Positive Assurance scheme and identification of gaps in the current monitoring arrangements, a new system of Claims to Records Checks (CRC) has been developed and agreed by the group. It is anticipated that the new system will commence in the summer of 2005.

## Outline of New System

The fundamental principal behind the system is that claims for payments from the GDS budget will be checked against the relevant dental record. This exercise will be carried out by dental probity officers, contracted by the Boards. The most up-to-date information describes the process as:

1. Notice of the examination of records will be forwarded to the practice a minimum of one month in advance (no details of the records to be examined will be forwarded at this time). An acknowledgement slip will accompany this notice. The practitioner may opt for the examination to take place at the practice or on HPSS premises. The practitioner will return the completed acknowledgement slip to the Board indicating which arrangement they are opting for.
2. A letter will be sent to the practice informing the practitioner of the records to be examined

(information will include patient details and dates pertaining to the claim) allowing at least 48 hours for the practice to retrieve the records.

3. If the practitioner opts for records to be examined at the practice, then reconciliation of records and claims will take place at the agreed time along with discussion on findings. Probity officers may wish to copy records but records will normally remain on site.
4. If the practitioner opts for records to be examined at HPSS premises, then he/she is required to have the records available for collection as agreed with the Board.
  - a. The probity officer will collect the records and take them away for checking and will return them to the practice, or
  - b. If the practitioner chooses to be present at the HPSS site he/she meets the probity officer at the checking site and after checking, the records are returned to the practitioner at the site
5. The Board will ensure that those who are involved in the post payment checks are aware of the need to respect patient confidentiality and it will take appropriate steps to see that such confidentiality is not breached. Procedures will be consistent with the "The Protection and Use of Patient and Client Information" guidelines issued by the Department's Information Policy Branch in June 1999. Wherever possible, advance notice will be given to the practitioner of the names of those who will be visiting.
6. The practitioner's presence during the process is at his/her discretion.

## Outcomes of CRC

The GDP or person nominated by the GDP will normally be informed of the early conclusions arising at the end of the visit. Subsequent to each visit, the practitioner will be provided with a written report, normally within 20 working days, and given an opportunity to comment on the findings before the Board formally considers them. A final report will be issued and, if appropriate, any follow up action will be undertaken.

## Special Waste Update

We mentioned in the winter edition of CDO News that the contract for collection of special waste was expected to be operational at this stage. The tendering process faced a significant number of unexpected delays but the contract tender has now gone out and the closing date passed. It is hoped that the special waste collection service will be operational in September 2005. Practitioners will be made aware of the arrangements closer to the time.

## Dental Branch Website

For further information on the work of Dental Branch visit our website on:

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/pgroups/dental/dental.asp>

The site contains most of the back issues of CDO News, reports of surveys carried out such as the sedation survey, survey of GDS and CDS dentists. It also has reports such as the Review of CDS, previous Annual Reports, the Oral Health Strategy and the Referral Dental Service Protocols.

## CDS Symposium

The Department hosted a one-day symposium for all CDS dentists on 31 May in the Radisson Roe Hotel in Limavady. The purpose of the day was to inform the CDS regarding the wider picture of DHSSPS activity.

There was an excellent turn out of over 60 delegates. The Department and NIMDTA jointly accredited the symposium for 5 hours of verifiable CPD.

The presentations delivered cover such topics as:

- > Priorities for Action: The way forward 2005 - 2008
- > Taking Forward the Recommendations of the CDS Review
- > The Future and Policy of Cross Infection Control and Decontamination
- > The Future of Primary Care Facilities
- > Update on the Learning Disabled Project
- > Progress on the Evidence Based Caries Reduction Programme
- > Investing for Health Dental Project.

In relation to the Investing for Health Dental Project, Michael Donaldson, Consultant in Dental Public Health, announced that the Department had made a funding package of £300,000 available over the next three years in order to further support evidence-based caries reduction programmes for pre-school children. Trust and Board dental staff were advised at the event how to bid for this funding.

A short evaluation report has been compiled and sent to all the delegates. Feed back from the delegates will be used to inform the planning of further events for the CDS.

## Taking Forward the CDS Review

The Review of the Community Dental Service consultation document was published and distributed in December 2003, with the consultation period closing in March 2004. In total 72 replies to the consultation document were received. Overall the replies were strongly in agreement with the recommendations contained in the CDS Review. However, there were 3 issues that were raised consistently in the responses:

1. The value of undertaking a review of the CDS without reviewing the GDS at the same time
2. The cost associated with implementing the recommendations
3. The danger that the time available to CDS staff to deliver clinical dental care will be diminished by:
  - a. Trying to quality assure existing processes
  - b. Providing training for service development or trying to close identified skill gaps
  - c. Trying to improve information management systems

A report summarising the responses received is now available from Dental Branch.

Action on bringing forward the recommendations has been delayed due to the development of key strategies and reviews, such as the Oral Health Strategy, the Primary Dental Care Strategy, the Review of Public Administration and Agenda for Change, which have a direct bearing on the future direction of the CDS. Now that these projects are either complete or at an advanced stage, John Farrell from Primary Care Directorate is developing a work programme to bring forward the recommendations.

The work programme will focus on 6 key areas:

- > Corporate plan
- > ICT
- > Staff development and CPD
- > Research and identification of best practice
- > Clinical governance
- > Oral health promotion.

Work on these key areas will be developed separately, and within varying timescales.

## News in Brief

### 2005 Honours List

Mr Norman Campbell was awarded the OBE in the 2005 Birthday Honours for his services to dentistry.

Norman is an Associate Specialist in Dental Surgery in the Belfast City Hospital with responsibility for special needs, including the learning disabled. We would like to congratulate Norman and thank him for all the advice and support he has given dentists and the learning disabled.

### Primary Dental Care Strategy

The Primary Dental Care Strategy Project team has received valuable feedback from the various focus groups in February. This feedback will be used along with the other information gathered from the profession and Project Team to report to the Project Board.

We will report further on the strategy in the Autumn newsletter.

# Dental Nurse Training

With the pending registration of dental nurses with the GDC on the horizon, dentists will undoubtedly be keen to encourage their dental nurses to hold a recognised qualification. Dental nurse training in Northern Ireland is provided by the Higher and Further Education sector and leads to the examination for the National Certificate awarded by the National Examining Board for Dental Nurses. While we understand that practitioners have many commitments on their time and resources, we would encourage dentists to support their nurses both in terms of flexibility with time and course fees.

The list below outlines the various courses available across the province for the coming academic year:

## Upper Bann Institute:

<b>Places</b>	Up to 28
<b>Dates</b>	September 2005 to May 2006
<b>Course Type</b>	Part time
<b>Day/Time</b>	Thursdays 7.00pm - 10pm at the Portadown Campus
<b>Course Tuition Fee</b>	£82 (textbooks approx. £35) plus NEBDN exam fees
<b>Contact</b>	Bryan McLaughlin, 028 3839 7780 or General office on 028 3839 7777 or e-mail: McLaughlinB@ubi.ac.uk
<b>Other</b>	Open only to dental nurses currently in employment or who have had previous, recent experience in dental nurse employment.

## Newry Institute

<b>Places</b>	32 (16 per course)
<b>Dates</b>	Starts 26 September, 30 week programme
<b>Course Type</b>	Part time
<b>Day/Time</b>	Tuesdays 6.30pm - 9.30pm Wednesdays 9.30am - 12.30pm
<b>Course Tuition Fee</b>	£180 (reduced fee of £50 for those on Family Credit)
<b>Contact</b>	Noleen Smith phone 028 3025 9604
<b>Other</b>	No exclusions for lack of experience

## Fermanagh College

<b>Places</b>	National Certificate: 20 (approx.) CiOH: 20 (approx.)
<b>Dates</b>	13 September onwards
<b>Course Type</b>	• National • CiOH
<b>Day/Time</b>	FT: Wednesday 9.00am-4.15pm PT: Wednesday 6.00pm-9.00pm CiOH: Tuesday 6.00pm-9.00pm
<b>Course Tuition Fee</b>	FT: £250/£150 for those on benefit PT: £130/£80 for those on benefit CiOH: £90/£55 for those on benefit Exam: £120
<b>Contact</b>	Admissions: 028 66 342237
<b>Other</b>	No experience needed for FT but PT must be in service

## North Down & Ards Institute of Further & Higher Education

<b>Places</b>	20
<b>Dates</b>	Sept 05 - May 06
<b>Course Type</b>	Part time
<b>Day/Time</b>	Monday and Thursday 7.30pm-9.30am
<b>Course Tuition Fee</b>	£327 (incl. 'day schools') (exam registration: £125)
<b>Contact</b>	Carol Graham 028 9127 6808 for details on enrolment
<b>Other</b>	Course tutor is Stephanie Boyd www.ndai.ac.uk for other information.

## Belfast Institute of Higher & Further Education (BIFHE)

<b>Places</b>	FT:40; DR:25; E:25
<b>Dates</b>	1st September 2005 onwards
<b>Course Type</b>	National Certificate CiOH
<b>Day/Time</b>	FT: Tuesday-Thursday 9.00am-4.30pm DR: Tuesday 9.00am-17.00pm E: Monday 6.45pm-8.45pm CiOH: Thursday 6.45pm
<b>Course Tuition Fee</b>	DR: £300 E: £115 CiOH: £90
<b>Contact</b>	Anna Williamson Dept. Sec. on 028 9026 5037
<b>Other</b>	No experience needed for FT or DR but 3 months required for PT

## Ballymena (BIFHE Outreach)

<b>Places</b>	25
<b>Dates</b>	Thursday 8th September onwards
<b>Course Type</b>	National Certificate
<b>Day/Time</b>	PT Thursday 6.45pm-8.45pm
<b>Course Tuition Fee</b>	£115
<b>Contact</b>	Anna Williamson Dept. Sec. on 028 9026 5037
<b>Other</b>	

## Derry (BIFHE Outreach)

<b>Places</b>	Training under review
<b>Dates</b>	
<b>Course Type</b>	
<b>Day/Time</b>	
<b>Course Tuition Fee</b>	
<b>Contact</b>	Anna Williamson Dept. Sec. on 028 90 265037
<b>Other</b>	

Key to abbreviations: FT Full-time DR Day release E Evening CiOH Certificate in Oral Health