

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride



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

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÁNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydënter Heisin
an Fowk Siccar**

Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast BT4 3SQ
Tel: 028 9076 5615
Fax: 028 90523206
E-mail: [sgu-
niceguidance@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:sgu-niceguidance@dhsspsni.gov.uk)

Circular HSC (SQSD) (NICE) 42/08 CG 55

Chief Executives of HSS Boards – **for distribution to:**

Directors of Public Health
Directors of Nursing
Directors of Pharmaceutical Services
Directors of Primary Care – for cascade to prescribing and GP
Advisors

Chief Executives of HSC Trusts – **for distribution to:**

Medical Directors – for cascade to relevant staff
Directors of Nursing – for cascade to relevant staff
Directors of Pharmaceutical Services – for cascade to relevant
staff

Date: 12 August 2008

General Practitioners

HSC Clinical and Social Governance Leads

Chief Executives of HSC Special Agencies and NDPBs

For Information

Chairs of HSS Boards
Chairs of HSC Trusts
Chief Executive, Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority
Chief Officers HSC Councils
Chief Executive/Postgraduate Dean, NIMDTA
Chief Executive, NIPPET
Chief Executive, NIPEC
Chief Executive, RMSC

Dear Colleagues

NICE Clinical Guideline No 55 – Intrapartum Care

NICE has produced guidance which covers the care of healthy women who are giving birth at 37- 42 weeks. Most of these women have a straightforward pregnancy with almost 90% giving birth to a single baby after 37 weeks of pregnancy. About two thirds of women go into labour spontaneously. The majority of women giving birth therefore fall under the scope of this guideline.

This guideline does not cover the care of women with:

- suspected or confirmed preterm labour;
- women with an intrauterine death of their baby;
- women with co-existing severe morbidities such as pre-eclampsia or diabetes;
- women who have multiple pregnancies; or
- women with an intrauterine growth retardation of the unborn baby.

DHSSPS advises that this NICE Clinical Guidance is valid for Northern Ireland and endorses it as good practice guidance for the HSC sector.

The full NICE guideline is available for download at: <http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/CG55>

The HSC sector also should note that:

1. The Department expects the HSC sector to take account of this guidance in their delivery of services to pregnant women in labour.
2. The Department recognises that these guidelines have significant implications for HSC in terms of staff resources, staff training and service provision – particularly in relation to offering home birth as a choice of place to give birth and the availability of midwife-led care. It is therefore acknowledged that it will take some time for HSC to fully implement the NICE recommendations.
3. This advice does not override or replace the individual responsibility of health professionals to make appropriate decisions in the circumstances of their individual patients, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer. This would, for example, include situations where individual patients have other conditions or complications that need to be taken into account in determining whether the NICE guidance is fully appropriate in their case.
4. NICE has developed tools to help organisations implement this guidance. These are available at <http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/CG55> and include costing tools, implementation advice and audit criteria to monitor local practice.

All NICE guidance endorsed by the Department to date can be accessed on the DHSSPS website at <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/sqsd-guidance-nice-guidance>

Circular HSS (PPMD) (NICE)01/006 issued on 30 June 2006 provides further information on the Northern Ireland process for reviewing NICE guidance and further details on the local status of the Institute's guidance. This circular can be accessed at: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/nice_guidance_01-06.pdf



DR MICHAEL MCBRIDE
Chief Medical Officer