



Department of

Health, Social Services and Public Safety

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AN ROINN

Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí

MANNYSTRIE O

Poustie, Resydènter Heisin
an Fowk Siccar

For action:

Chief Executives of HSC Trusts
Chief Executives HSS Boards
Chief Pharmacists in HSC Trusts/Boards

For information:

Medical Directors HSC Trusts
Medical Director NIAS
Directors of Nursing HSS Boards/HSC Trusts
Directors of Public Health in HSS Boards
NI Medicines Governance Team
Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (for cascade to relevant regulated establishments and independent hospitals, clinics and hospices)
Professor R Hay, Head of School of Medicine and Dentistry, QUB
Professor James McElnay, Dean of Life and Health Science, UU
Professor Jean Orr CBE, Head of School of Nursing and Midwifery, QUB
Professor Sean Gorman, Head of School of Pharmacy, QUB
Dr Carol Curran, Head of School of Nursing, UU
Regional Medicines Information Service
Mrs Teresa Molloy, Regional Supplies Service
Northern Ireland Clinical and Social Care Governance Support Team
Chief Executives NIMDTA, NICPPET, NIPEC

**From: The Chief Pharmaceutical Officer
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**Circular HSC (SQSD) 28/2007
Addendum 1/08**

14th April 2008

Dear Colleague,

NPSA Safe Medication Alerts – Safer Practice with Epidural Injections and Infusions

In June 07 we issued a series of alerts under Circular HSC (SQSD) 28/2007 relating to medication safety namely:-

- Actions that make anticoagulant therapy safer – Alert 18
- Promoting safer measurement and administration of liquid medicines via oral and other enteral routes – Alert 19
- Promoting safer use of injectable medicines – Alert 20
- Safer practice with epidural injections and infusions – Alert 21

Within the circular we identified Trust Chief Pharmacists to lead and co-ordinate the implementation programme working with other clinical colleagues, the Northern Ireland Medicines Governance Team and educational establishments.

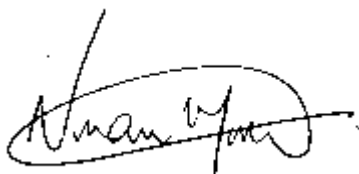
Work has been ongoing but we wish to particularly draw to your attention and endorse the recommendations of the working Group on epidural injections and infusions to ensure consistent application across the HSC. A copy is attached.

Further work is also being taken forward by the Northern Ireland Medicines Governance Pharmacists and Acute Pain Nurses to develop a regional template for the management of epidural analgesia. In addition, Victoria Pharmaceuticals (Belfast HSC Trust) have worked closely with the Group to standardise the range of unlicensed epidural products required for therapy. This will reduce the need to prepare epidurals in the clinical environment and ensure that ready to administer products will be available from a 'Specials' manufacturer in N. Ireland.

The original timetable for implementation of Circular HSC (SQSD) 28/2007 of 30th June 2008 remains in place.

Finally, may we take this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge all the work that has been done to improve medication safety.

Yours sincerely,



DR NORMAN C MORROW
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer



DR MAURA BRISCOE
Director of Safety, Quality and Standards Directorate