

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

Room D4.7

Castle Buildings

Stormont Estate

Belfast

BT4 3SQ

Tel: 02890 523 219

Fax: 02890 522 335

Email:

norman.morrow@dhsspsni.gov.uk

Circular HSC (SQSD) 28/2007

Addendum 2/08

Date: 12 August 2008

Dear Colleague

NPSA Patient Safety Alert 21 – Safer Practice with Epidural Injections and Infusions

In April 2008 we issued Addendum 1/08 to Circular HSC (SQSD) 28/2007 relating to Safer Practice with Epidural Injections and Infusions which included the Regional Working Group's recommendations for implementation in Northern Ireland.

Following a query the Regional Working Group has now updated these

recommendations to clarify its advice in respect of labelling. Addendum 1/08 indicates that *'Intravenous drug labels must not be yellow in colour'*. This recommendation relates to the colour of **additive** labels that are attached to infusion bags and syringes following preparation of an infusion and not the labelling on induction agents used in anaesthetics.

Where additive labels are also in use for other routes of infusion, for example, subcutaneous infusions, these also must **not** be yellow in colour. The Regional Working Group also recommend that Trusts must consider the use of another colour (i.e. grey) for labelling of other infusion systems for delivery of local anaesthetic drugs. The revised recommendations are attached.

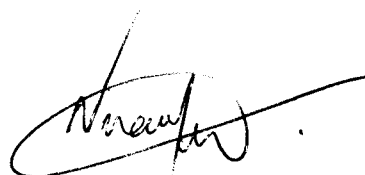
It is important to clarify that labels used as part of the International Colour Coding System for Syringe Labelling recommended by the Councils of the Royal College of Anaesthetists, the Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland, the Faculty of Accident and Emergency Medicine and the Intensive Care Society are **not** additive labels and are unaffected by this recommendation.

Finally, may we take this opportunity to again acknowledge the contribution of the Regional Working Group to this important aspect of patient safety and the importance attached to implementation of the recommended actions.

Yours sincerely



Dr J P Livingstone
Safety, Quality and Standards



Dr Norman C Morrow
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer