

Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety
An Roinn Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta agus Sábháilteacht Phoiblí

From The Chief Medical Officer:
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HSS(MD)12/00

To: Directors of Public Health

6 June 2000

Dear Doctor

*NOTES ON TRACING CONTACTS OF PASSENGERS ARRIVING BY AIR SUFFERING FROM, OR
SUSPECTED OF SUFFERING FROM, DANGEROUS INFECTIOUS DISEASES*

Enclose notes on the procedure which should be adopted in tracing contacts of passengers arriving by air suffering from, or suspected of suffering from, a dangerous infectious disease.

The previous letters of August 1979, 12 August 1981, 28 February 1983, 16 May 1988 and 30 April 1996 (references: HSS(MD) 14/79, HSS(MD) 6/81, HSS(MD) 3/83, HSS(MD) 10/88, HSS(MD) 11/96, HSS(MD) 10/97, HSS(MD) 26/98 and HSS(MD) 17/99 respectively on this subject should be cancelled.

Yours sincerely



HENRIETTA CAMPBELL (Dr)

cc Consultants in Communicable Disease Control
Dr Leese, DOH(L)
Dr Skinner, SHHD
Dr Smith, WO
Dr Kiely, DOH (Dublin)
DHSS Information Office
HQ Medical Staff
Dr B Smyth, RE

Enc



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**NOTES ON TRACING CONTACTS OF PASSENGERS ARRIVING BY AIR
SUFFERING FROM, OR SUSPECTED OF SUFFERING FROM, DANGEROUS
INFECTIOUS DISEASES**

1. When a Director of Public Health or any of his medical staff within the Area Board becomes aware of a case, or a suspected case, of dangerous infectious disease and finds that the person affected has arrived recently by air from abroad (say within the immediately preceding sixteen days), he is expected to report the case immediately to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he or she has reason to believe that other persons who travelled by the same aircraft may be contacts. (This is usually done by telephone to Dr Mitchell (028) 90 520716 or CMO's office (028) 90 520563).

2. The information required to be given to enable contacts to be traced as quickly as possible is as follows:-
 - (a) Name of patient
 - (b) Disease
 - (c) Date of onset
 - (d) Date of appearance of rash or commencement of pyrexia
 - (e) Airports of arrival in GB as well as Northern Ireland
 - (f) Dates and times of arrival there
 - (g) Flight number/s of aircraft (or name of place where the patient boarded the aircraft)
 - (h) Name/s of aircraft company/ies
 - (i) Place abroad at which the patient started his journey
 - (j) Date on which he left that place

3. On receipt of this information it will then be for the Department to decide whether a warning notice for publication by the press, the BBC and UTV should be issued. This will be done after consultations with the CMO. When a decision has been made the following action will be taken by the Department:-
 - (i) arrange for the Health Departments of England, Wales, Scotland and the Irish Republic to be informed that such a decision has been made;
 - (ii) arrange the preparation and issue of a warning notice as attached;
 - (iii) ask the Department's Information Officer to convey the warning to the Northern Ireland press;
 - (iv) telephone the broadcast warning notice, which will be prepared on the following lines, to Dr J Leese, Senior Medical Officer, HP (M) 1, Department of Health, London (telephone 0207-972-4480. Alternative number: Duty Medical Officer, Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre 0207-200-6868).

4. Where it is essential to take action outside office hours the undermentioned officers can be contacted at the telephone numbers shown:-

Dr E Mitchell	Belfast	(028) 90 761842
The Duty Officer	Belfast	(028) 90 520700

WARNING NOTICE TO BE SUPPLIED TO BBC, UTV AND PRESS.

The following urgent notice is issued by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. A person who arrived by air on(date) has been found/is suspected to be suffering from (disease). This person travelled by a (type) aircraft belonging to (name of Co) which landed at Airport on (day) (date) at/about..... (am)/(pm). It took off from (place where flight began) on the morning/afternoon/evening of and called at in the morning/afternoon/evening.

The name/number of the plane was

* [The person concerned also travelled by a (type of plane). Flight No of airline which arrived at (airport) at (time) on (date) from (place where flight began)].

As a precautionary measure all passengers who travelled on this/these aircraft including those who only travelled part of the way are advised in their own interest to report to the Director of Public Health of the Health and Social Services Board area in which they now happen to be, or to any other doctor.

Additional information for News Editors

"The patient referred to was reported by the Director of Public Health of Health and Social Services Board and has been admitted to hospital".

* This paragraph is to be used and may be extended as required where a patient travelled by more than one aircraft.

DEPARTMENT