

From the Chief Medical Officer  
**Dr Michael McBride**



Department of

**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta  
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÄNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin  
an Fowk Siccar**

**HSS (MD) 15/2008**

To:

Chief Executives, HSS Boards and Trusts  
Directors of Public Health, HSS Boards (*for onward distribution to screening leads and sexual health leads*)  
Director of Nursing, HSS Boards  
Directors of Pharmaceutical Services, HSS Boards/HSC Trusts/CSA  
GP Medical Advisers, HSS Boards  
Consultants in Communicable Disease Control, HSS Boards  
All Community Pharmacists  
Medical Directors, HSC Trusts (*for onward distribution to Consultants in genito-urinary medicine, gynaecology and family planning*).  
Nursing Directors, HSC Trusts (*for onward distribution to all Community Nurses and School Health Staff*)  
All General Practitioners (*for onward distribution to practice staff including practice nurses*)  
Regional Epidemiologist, CDSC (NI)  
Dr P Jackson, Chair, Regional Immunisation Committee  
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Date: 22 May 2008

Dear Colleague

## **INTRODUCTION OF HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS VACCINE INTO THE CHILDHOOD IMMUNISATION PROGRAMME**

This letter provides further information about the introduction of human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine into the childhood immunisation programme. The new programme will start from the beginning of the 2008/2009 school year. Following advice received from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), HPV immunisation will be offered routinely to all 12 to 13 year old girls (school year 9) to protect them against their future risk of cervical cancer.

Highly effective vaccines are now available that protect against the two high-risk HPV types, 16 and 18, that cause over 70% of cervical cancers. HPV vaccination will save the lives of an estimated 400 women each year in the UK.

Working for a Healthier People

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety is working closely with the Health and Social Care Trusts and other stakeholders to support the introduction of HPV immunisation. The key features of the HPV vaccination programme are that:

- the first cohort to be immunised will be girls born between 1 July 1995 and 30<sup>th</sup> June 1996 (school year 9 in 2008/2009);
- a three-dose course of HPV vaccination is required over about six months;
- a school-based programme has been recommended; and
- a range of information materials, guidance and other resources, for both professionals and the public, will be produced.

Health and Social Care Trusts are responsible for the implementation of the HPV immunisation programme through the school health service. In total, £400k will be provided to the Health and Social Care Trusts in the 2008/09 financial year to support the implementation of this programme.

A new chapter on HPV vaccine for '*Immunisation against Infectious Disease 2006*' is now available and provides clinical advice ([www.dh.gov.uk/greenbook](http://www.dh.gov.uk/greenbook)).

Further detailed guidance on programme implementation is being issued from Dr Lorraine Doherty, Consultant Epidemiologist and Senior Medical Officer alongside this letter.

A two-year catch-up campaign will start from the beginning of the 2009/2010 school year for all girls aged up to 18 years. Further information on the catch-up campaign will follow in due course.

JCVI also advised that a catch-up campaign for all women aged 18 years and over was not cost effective, but that HPV immunisation could benefit some individual women. The Department of Health, Social Service and Public Safety is waiting on advice from DH (L).

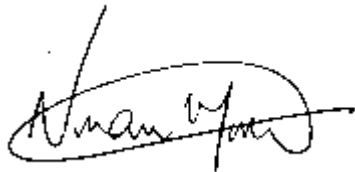
It is important to note that the national cervical screening programme remains essential to the prevention of cervical cancer, and will remain unchanged following the introduction of HPV immunisation. It is vital to ensure that cervical screening rates remain high. Immunisation will not protect against all the HPV types that cause cervical cancer. Women who do not have the vaccine will remain completely unprotected.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who will help deliver this important new vaccination programme.

Yours sincerely



**Dr M McBride**  
Chief Medical Officer



**Dr N Morrow**  
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer



**Mr M Bradley**  
Chief Nursing Officer

cc Mr A McCormick, Permanent Secretary  
Dr Michael McBride, Chief Medical Officer  
Mr D Hill, Deputy Secretary, DHSSPS  
Dr E Mitchell, Deputy Chief Medical Officer  
Ms C Jendoubi, Director Primary Care DHSSPS  
Mr A Elliott, Director of Health Development, DHSSPS  
Mr S Camplisson, Health Protection Team, DHSSPS  
Ms K Simpson, Health Protection Team, DHSSPS  
Mr J Farrell, Principal, GMS Contract Unit, DHSSPS  
Directors of Primary Care, Health & Social Services Boards  
Local Health & Social Care Groups – Chairs/Managers  
Dr B Dunn, Chair, GPC, BMA  
Dr B Gaffney, Chief Executive, HPA NI  
Ms C Baxter, Information Office, DHSSPS  
Members of the RACCDC Regional Immunisation Committee