

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

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Our Ref: HSS(MD)23/2008

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HSS(MD)23/2008

To: Chief Executives HSS Boards
Chief Executives HSC Trusts
Directors of Public Health HSS Boards (*for onward distribution to Consultants in Communicable Disease Control, Screening Leads and Sexual Health Leads*)
Medical Directors HSC Trusts (*for onward distribution to Consultants in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Consultant Microbiologists, Consultant Virologists, Consultants in Genito-Urinary Medical and Family Planning Doctors*)
Nursing Directors HSC Trusts (*for onward dissemination to Sexual Health Advisers, Genitourinary Clinics and Family Planning Nurses*)
All General Practitioners (*for onward distribution to practice staff*)
Regional Epidemiologists
CDSC(NI)

Dear Colleague

PLANNING FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF CHLAMYDIA TESTING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

I am writing to advise you of the arrangements the Department are putting in place to plan for the introduction of a Chlamydia Testing Policy in mid 2009. Genital Chlamydia Trachomatis Infection is the most commonly diagnosed bacterial sexually transmitted infection in Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinics across the United Kingdom. Chlamydia testing/screening programmes have been developed in other parts of the UK over the last number of years and are currently being rolled out across the UK.

A Regional Steering Group has been looking at the issues around Chlamydia testing in Northern Ireland including the feasibility of introducing Chlamydia testing programme in Northern Ireland. I am pleased to inform you that we are committed to introducing such a programme and of the current work programme as follows:

1. A Regional Chlamydia Testing Steering Group chaired by Dr Lorraine Doherty, Consultant Epidemiologist/Senior Medical Officer, from this Department will oversee the development of definitive policy and the Chlamydia testing programme.
2. A Project Implementation Group which is a subgroup of the Regional Steering Committee will be chaired by Dr Tracey Owen, Consultant in Public Health Medicine, Southern Health and Social Services Board, and will develop the operational approaches to Chlamydia testing over the coming months.

Chlamydia Testing Programme in Northern Ireland (CTPNI)

The CTPNI will offer opportunistic screening for Genital Chlamydia to sexually active men and women, aged under 25 years, in a variety of settings in Northern Ireland. It is anticipated that CTPNI will be introduced on a phased basis thus allowing for management growth of the overall programme.

The Regional Steering Committee have been undertaking a programme of work to look at the different settings within which Chlamydia testing might be delivered and this has included a number of feasibility studies. The results of all this work will be used to develop the operational arrangements for the testing programme. In this regard I would ask you to make key stakeholders within your organisations aware of the proposals to develop a testing programme and to co-operate fully with the development for same. We will be issuing further guidance on this programme once the Project Support Group have developed arrangements for implementation.

Yours sincerely



DR M McBRIDE
Chief Medical Officer

Cc Mr Norman Morrow
Mr Martin Bradley
Dr L Mitchell
Mr A Elliott
Dr L Doherty
Dr N Chada
Mr G Collins
Mr S Camplisson
Ms K Simpson
Ms J Moore

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