

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

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AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÁNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin
an Fowk Siccar**

HSS(MD)35/2010

Chief Executive, Public Health Agency
Chief Executive, Health and Social Care Board
Chief Executive, Business Services Organisation
Director Public Health, Public Health Agency – *for onward
distribution to public health screening leads*
Chief Executives of HSC Trusts
Medical Directors of HSC Trusts – *for onward distribution to
consultant obstetricians and gynaecologists and
pathologists and family planning doctors.*
Director of Nursing, Public Health Agency
All General Practitioners - *for onward distribution to practice
nurses*

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Your Ref:
Our Ref: HSS(MD)35/2010
Date: 14 September 2010

Dear Colleague

CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDANCE FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF YOUNG WOMEN AGED 20-24 WITH ABNORMAL VAGINAL BLEEDING

I am writing to draw your attention to Clinical Practice Guidance for the assessment of young women aged 20-24 with abnormal vaginal bleeding which has been developed by the Advisory Committee on Cervical Screening (ACCS) in England and to commend its use in Northern Ireland.

This guidance was developed following an ACCS meeting in May 2009 at which the evidence on the age to start cervical screening was reviewed and a recommendation made that the age to start screening should remain at age 25. [As detailed in my letter of 27 July 2010 (HSS(MD)28/2010), in Northern Ireland the age to start cervical screening will increase from 20 to 25 years from January 2011.] At that meeting ACCS members stated their concern about the management of some, but by no means all, symptomatic young women presenting to primary care. In order to help GPs in what is a very difficult area, the ACCS recommended that new clinical guidance should be produced.

The new guidance was produced by a working group set up in England in September 2009. In developing the guidance the group considered all available evidence including the *NICE Referral Guideline for Suspected Cancer (2005)*. The guidance was reviewed by a number of GPs, and has been endorsed by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Royal College of Physicians.

