

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) 50/2009

To:

Chief Executive of PHA  
Chief Executive of HSC Board  
Chief Executive of BSO  
Director of Public Health of PHA – *for onward distribution to public health screening leads*  
Chief Executives of HSC Trusts – *for onward distribution to lead directors for colonoscopy services*  
Medical Directors of HSC Trusts – *for onward distribution to consultant surgeons, physicians, radiologists, pathologists*  
Director of Nursing of PHA  
Director of Nursing of HSC Trusts – *for onward distribution to nurse endoscopists and endoscopy nurses*  
GP Units – *for onward distribution to All General Practitioners*

Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
Belfast BT4 3SQ  
Tel: 028 9052 0563  
Fax: 028 9052 0574  
Email: [michael.mcbride@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:michael.mcbride@dhsspsni.gov.uk)

Your Ref:  
Our Ref: HSS(MD) 50/2009  
Date: 26 October 2009

Dear Colleague

## **BOWEL CANCER SCREENING PROGRAMME IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this letter is to provide a further update on the policy and planning for the bowel screening programme in Northern Ireland. The outline and purpose of the programme are detailed in HSS(MD) 31/2009. Considerable work has already been undertaken by commissioners and Trusts, led by the project management team, to meet the Priorities for Action target:

***Bowel cancer screening (PSA 1.11): by December 2009, Commissioners and Trusts should establish a comprehensive bowel screening programme for those aged 60-69 (to include appropriate arrangements for follow-up treatment).***

However as there has been a need for DHSSPS to identify funding from within the Health and Social Care budget to meet a range of high priority pressures including swine flu, it is necessary to delay the start of the bowel screening programme to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010. Revenue funds are available in 2009-10 to ensure that all essential set-up requirements for the screening programme are in place in advance of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010. Capital money is also available in 2009-10 to purchase equipment and undertake required capital works.

## **Implementation of Bowel Screening Programme – Update**

Significant progress towards implementing the Bowel Screening Programme in Northern Ireland has already been achieved in a range of areas in readiness for implementation including the establishment of a call/recall centre, setting up of an IT system and a FOB/FIT screening laboratory. Health and Social Care Trusts have each nominated a screening colonoscopy centre and are currently working towards JAG accreditation. Quality Assurance Standards have been agreed to ensure the programme will operate within a quality assured framework and a range of public and professional information leaflets and material have been developed.

### **Resources**

The Public Health Agency has retained £147k revenue monies in 2009-10 to fund the essential set-up costs of the Bowel Cancer Screening Programme that will enable implementation from 01 April 2010. These include the appointment and training of additional staff, purchase of screening kits and the production of information materials.

Capital Funding totalling £842k will be made available in 2009-10 to allow for the purchase of capital equipment and minor capital works to be undertaken in advance of the implementation date of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010.

### **Revised Actions**

Due to the change to the start date, the revised actions required are as follows:

- a) The Public Health Agency, Health and Social Care Board, Business Services Organisation and Trusts should work together, with the support of the Bowel Cancer Screening Project Board, to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place by April 2010 to offer bowel cancer screening to eligible men and women aged between 60 and 69 in the first instance.
- b) Commissioners and Trusts should ensure that arrangements are in place for the timely management of those who are diagnosed with bowel cancer.
- c) Commissioners and Trusts should have appropriate fail-safe mechanisms in place to ensure that screening is offered to all eligible people and that those who require referral are followed up in a timely and appropriate way.
- d) The programme should meet the standards established in the “Northern Ireland Bowel Cancer Screening Programme - Quality Assurance Standards and Criteria.” All care should meet the DHSSPS Quality Standards for Health and Social Care.

### **Further information**

Any queries on the bowel cancer screening programme can be directed to Dr Margaret Boyle email [Margaret.Boyle2@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:Margaret.Boyle2@dhsspsni.gov.uk) or telephone (028) 90 520713

Or

