

*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**

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HSS(MD) 53/2009

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**Head of Occupational Health Services, UU**

Your Ref:  
Our Ref: HSS(MD) 53/200  
Date: 17 November 2009

Dear Colleagues

## HIV INFECTED HEALTHCARE WORKERS: GUIDANCE ON MANAGEMENT AND PATIENT NOTIFICATION

I wish to bring to your attention updated guidance on management and patient notification in situations in which a healthcare worker becomes infected with HIV. This guidance mirrors that in the remainder of the UK and is based on advice from the Expert Advisory Group on AIDS (EAGA) and the UK Advisory Panel for Healthcare Workers Infected with Blood-borne Viruses (UKAP). It will replace the current DHSSPS guidance (HSS(MD) 29/98).

### Patient notification

The experts consider that it is no longer necessary to notify every patient who has undergone an exposure prone procedure (EPP) by an HIV infected healthcare worker because of the low risk of transmission and the anxiety caused to patients and the wider public. However, the long-standing restriction on HIV infected healthcare workers carrying out EPPs remains.

It is recommended that the decision on whether a patient notification exercise should be undertaken should be assessed on a case-by-case basis using a criteria based framework, as set out in this document. Detailed advice is given on the conduct of such notifications and on the role of the Director of Public Health.

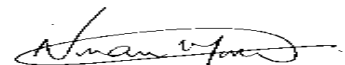
### HIV Infected Healthcare workers: guidance on management

Matters relating to the employment of an infected health care worker should be coordinated through a specialist occupational physician who is expected to liaise with the attending specialist physician. The need for proper support and care for an infected health care worker is highlighted as is the issue of confidentiality. Relevant services are described and reference made to legislation on disability discrimination and health and safety.

If advice on a particular case is required, please contact Dr Carolyn Harper, the Director of Public Health of the Public Health Agency, who will be responsible for deciding whether patient notification is necessary. The UKAP is also available to provide advice.

For convenience the Guidance on the implementation of the new arrangements is attached. It is also available on the DHSSPS website at: [www.dhssps.gov.uk](http://www.dhssps.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely



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Chief Nursing Officer

**DR NORMAN MORROW**  
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

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## **For information**

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