



Chief Executives, HSS Boards:

For cascade to –

- Directors of Public Health
- Directors of Nursing
- Directors of Pharmaceutical Services
- Directors of Primary Care
- Directors of Local Travel Clinics

Chief Executives, HSS Trusts (existing & new):

For cascade to –

- Medical Directors
- Directors of Nursing
- Directors of Pharmacy

General Medical and Community Pharmacy
Practices (for cascade to practice staff)

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Your Ref:

Our Ref: HSS(SQSD) 10/2007

Date: 20th February 2007

Dear Colleagues

RE: WARNING TO TRAVELLERS WHO CHANGE THEIR TRAVEL PLANS

The DHSSPS wishes to draw to your attention a reported serious adverse incident, where a student died from malaria. His GP had given him appropriate health advice for his initial travel plans including malaria prophylaxis. Whilst abroad his plans changed, he travelled to a different area, contracted malaria and died.

The learning points arising from this tragic death are:

1. To provide patients with written advice appropriate to their specific travel plans.
2. Reinforce verbally that the advice and prophylaxis they have been given is specific to the countries in their plan and that further advice should be sought if their plans change.
3. Consider increasing the allotted time for consultations with patients who have complex itineraries. Students are more likely to have extended travel plans.

In addition, the HPSS should note the following:

4. Staff training. Boards and GP Practices may wish to consider using professional resources, including Travel Medicine Conferences and Study Days available through the National Travel Health Network and Centre website funded by the Department of Health. The RCN also provide guidance to nursing staff working in travel health.

5. Audit. Boards and GP practices may wish to consider reviewing the effectiveness of practice “malaria messages”, including the need for the patient to inform the practice of any changes to planned itineraries.

As students are a particular group who might be more likely to change their travel plans, the Department is taking this opportunity to copy this letter to both universities, the Department of Education and the Department of Employment and Learning. In doing so, these establishments are asked to use appropriate opportunities to cascade the message to students that they should seek early health advice on proposed travel plans and re-enforce the message that the malaria prophylaxis given is specific to the countries in their plan and that further health advice should be sought if their plans change.

Yours sincerely



Maura Briscoe
Safety, Quality and Standards Directorate
Office of the Chief Medical Officer

- cc.** Chief Executive, Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority
- Chief Executive, HSS Agencies
- Chief Officers, HSS Councils
- Chief Executive, NI Practice & Education Council
- Chief Executive, NI Medical & Dental Training Agency
- Director, NI Centre for Post Graduate Pharmaceutical Education and Training
- Risk Managers/CSCG Leads