

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride



Department of

Health, Social Services and Public Safety

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AN ROINN

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HSS(MD)21/2010

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For circulation to all Medical Staff
Dean of QUB Medical School
Postgraduate Dean, NIMDTA
All General Practitioners (including GP Locums)

Your Ref:
Our Ref: HSS(MD)21/2010
Date: 18th June 2010

Dear Colleague

INTRODUCTION OF REVALIDATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

You may be aware of recent correspondence between The Secretary of State for Health in England and the Chair of the General Medical Council in relation to medical revalidation. I am aware that some have taken this to signal that the introduction of revalidation is in some doubt and may be deferred indefinitely. I am writing to assure you that this is not the case.

In his letter, the Secretary of State makes it quite clear that *“revalidation is something that the public expect their doctors to undertake”*. However, he feels that extending the current *Pathfinder* pilots taking place in England by 1 year will allow adequate time to evaluate learning from pilots, and understand the costs and benefits of revalidation. His position is entirely consistent with the principles underpinning the implementation of revalidation; that elements will be piloted and evaluated before being rolled out more widely. This is a position I support.

In addition, He has given his commitment to ensuring that the necessary legislation to support revalidation will proceed. Regulations establishing the Responsible Officer role in England, Scotland and Wales will be laid before Parliament shortly. The equivalent legislation in Northern Ireland is now being taken through The Assembly with a view to having Responsible Officers in place in designated organisations by 1st October 2010.

Through the *Confidence in Care* Programme we are continuing with our piloting and testing of local systems in primary and secondary care to ensure they are sufficiently robust to support revalidation. We will share these findings with the GMC's UK Revalidation Programme Board who will undertake an assessment of readiness to proceed prior to implementation in Northern Ireland. The GMC stated in its consultation *Revalidation: The Way Ahead*, that no doctor will be required to revalidate before 2011. This remains the case and we await the consultation report and proposals from the GMC in relation to when, where and how revalidation will be implemented. This is expected in Autumn 2010. We will continue to work closely with colleagues in the rest of the UK to ensure consistency of approach.

In conclusion, I want to reassure you that our preparations for the introduction of revalidation remain unaltered and will continue to evolve in light of evidence gathered both locally and throughout the UK.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular box containing a white handwritten signature that reads "Michael McBride".

Dr Michael McBride
Chief Medical Officer

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