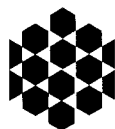


From the Acting Permanent Secretary
and HSC Acting Chief Executive
Dr Michael McBride



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

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MANNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin
an Fowk Siccar**

To Chief Executives of

- Public Health Agency
- Health and Social Care Board
- Health and Social Care Trusts
- Patient and Client Council
- Business Services Organisation

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Ref: MMCB 91

Date: 15 May 2009

Dear Colleague

PANDEMIC INFLUENZA: MANAGING DEMAND AND CAPACITY IN HEALTH CARE ORGANISATIONS (SURGE)

The Minister has decided that the above guidance published by the Department of Health (DH) on 1 May 2009 for health care organisations dealing with the response to a surge in pandemic influenza cases should be endorsed for use in Northern Ireland. The Department for Health in England is the lead UK agency for health response pandemic influenza. The four UK Health Departments work closely together on pandemic planning.

A copy of the relevant DH guidance "Pandemic Flu – Managing Demand and Capacity in Health Care Organisations (Surge)" is attached for reference. It may also be accessed from the Department of Health website

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_098769

There are references within the document to health and care structures as they exist in England and readers in Northern Ireland should understand references to Primary Care Trusts, Strategic Health Authorities and the Health Protection Agency to refer to the role of the Public Health Agency working with the Health and Social Care Board.

Readers in Northern Ireland should also consider this guidance in the context of the UK National Framework for Pandemic Flu, the Northern Ireland Interim Contingency Plan for Health Response for an Influenza Pandemic and updated information on the present situation available on the Department's website

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/phealth/php/infectious_diseases/pandemicflu.htm

As regards the DH surge planning guidance, I would ask the Public Health Agency to lead, working with HSC Board as part of Agency and Board's overall response to this incident and pandemic flu planning, a piece of work to develop appropriate implementation plans for Northern Ireland based on the guidance now available. I would ask the Agency and Board to confirm to the Department by the end of June 2009, that appropriate implementation measures have been agreed to ensure there is a clear plan to respond to any surge in pandemic flu cases in Northern Ireland in the months ahead.

The DH guidance identifies a series of measures that need to be taken into account in both primary and secondary care sectors as well as in the provision of community services. Implementation plans for Northern Ireland should recognise the integrated nature of health and social care services here. Mechanisms will also be needed to cascade this guidance to clinicians in both primary and secondary care.

Yours sincerely



MICHAEL McBRIDE