



NORTHERN IRELAND SIGNS UP TO THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION'S (WHO) GLOBAL PATIENT SAFETY CHALLENGE 'CLEAN CARE IS SAFER CARE'

On 13th March 2006 the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Northern Ireland) launched its three year Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Healthcare Associated Infections in Northern Ireland 2006/2009 (see attached link for DHSSPS Website: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/hcai_action_plan.pdf) at a major conference on these infections in Belfast – 'Changing the Culture'. Dr Andrew McCormick, Permanent Secretary launched the Plan and affirmed the DHSSPS commitment to leading improvements in infection prevention and control in Northern Ireland.

Dr Lorraine Doherty, Senior Medical Officer/Consultant Epidemiologist, outlined the key areas of action for the plan as follows:

- ▶ Organisation and culture
- ▶ Education, training and practices
- ▶ Governance, accountability and audit
- ▶ Surveillance
- ▶ Patient and public partnerships.

The Plan proposes a total of 37 actions to be progressed over 2006/2009 by all healthcare agencies. These include clear accountability arrangements within hospitals for infection prevention and control, mandatory training for all healthcare staff, a high profile hand hygiene campaign, enhanced surveillance of healthcare associated infections, and partnership working between healthcare providers, patients and the public.

On the afternoon of the conference Dr Andrew McCormick presented Sir Liam Donaldson (Chief Medical Officer of England and Chair of the Global Patient Safety Alliance) with the Ministerial Pledge committing Northern Ireland to the WHO Global Patient Safety Challenge. Sir Liam Donaldson gave a comprehensive presentation on the issues we need to address to change the culture to facilitate improvements in patient safety and reductions in healthcare associated infections. Professor Didier Pittet (*WHO to insert title preference*) presented on the importance of hand hygiene in infection prevention and the draft WHO Guidelines on Hand Hygiene were shared with conference delegates.

As part of the implementation of the Northern Ireland Action Plan a hand hygiene campaign will be run by hospitals during 2006/2007, based on the WHO Hand Hygiene Guidelines.

The 'Changing the Culture' conference in Belfast on 13th and 14th March 2006 featured presentations and masterclasses from world leaders in the areas of policy, surveillance, hand hygiene, decontamination, the environment and communication. This conference was a resounding success and has enhanced the knowledge of conference delegates to enable them to improve infection prevention and control approaches in Northern Ireland.