

From the Acting Chief Medical Officer
Dr Elizabeth Mitchell &
The Chief Nursing Officer
Mr Martin Bradley

HSS(MD)24-2006

To:
Chief Executives HSS Boards & Trusts
Directors of Public Health HSS Boards
Medical Directors HSS Trusts
Consultant Obstetricians
Consultant GUM Physicians
Consultants Paediatricians and Neonatologists
Directors of Nursing/Chief Nurse HSS Boards
Director of Nursing HSS Trusts
Midwifery Managers for circulation to midwives

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Dear Colleague

NORTHERN IRELAND GUIDELINES FOR THE ANTENATAL, INTRAPARTUM AND POSTNATAL CARE OF HIV POSITIVE WOMEN AND MANAGEMENT OF THE HIV-EXPOSED INFANT

Summary

Northern Ireland Guidelines for the management of HIV positive pregnant women and their baby have been developed by a multi-professional team. They are available on the Department's website at www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/hivpregnancyguidelines.pdf. All Health and Social Services Trusts should ensure their implementation within their Maternity Units.

Background

A regional policy of antenatal screening for HIV was implemented in April 2003 following the circular HSS(MD) 11/02. The circular gave a summary, background and rationale for this screening programme and outlined the responsibilities of and actions required by HSS Boards and Trusts for the implementation and running of the programme. A number of HIV positive pregnant women have been identified through this screening programme.

All pregnant women who are HIV positive should be managed by a multi-professional team as specialist management and appropriate treatment of these

women can reduce the risk of transmission from mother to baby, from over 25% to less than 2%. The Northern Ireland Guidelines for the Antenatal, Intrapartum and Postnatal care of HIV Positive Women and Management of the HIV-exposed Infant have been developed by a multi-professional team. The guidelines are based on the British HIV Association 2005 and Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists 2004 Guidelines for the Management of HIV infection in pregnant women and the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. They provide the information to ensure that safe and effective care of HIV positive pregnant women is an integral part of high quality care as outlined in the Quality Standards for Health and Social Care.


Although formal review of these guidelines is scheduled for July 2010 the guidelines may be amended prior to that date to reflect new evidence and research findings. The most recent version of the guidelines will be maintained on the Department's website at www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/hivpregnancyguidelines.pdf and management of HIV positive pregnant women should be in accordance with them.

A copy of these Guidelines has also been forwarded to RQIA to inform their quality improvement role.

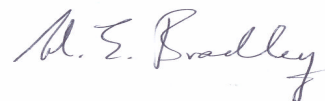
Action

HSS Trusts are asked to implement these guidelines within their organisation to ensure that HIV positive pregnant women receive safe and effective management of their pregnancy and infection. It is important that all relevant staff are aware of the guidelines and manage HIV positive women in accordance with them. Chief Executives are asked to confirm by 31 October 2006 that the guidelines are fully implemented. Confirmation should be indicated to Ms Jackie McGeagh, Regional Antenatal Screening Coordinator, at Room C4.17, Castle Buildings, Stormont, Belfast BT4 3SQ.

Yours sincerely



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Acting Chief Medical Officer



MR MARTIN BRADLEY
Chief Nursing Officer

cc: Chief Executive RQIA
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