

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride



Department of

**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

An Roinn

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

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HSS(MD)9/2007

To: All Trust Chief Executives
The Infection Prevention and Control Leads of HSS
Trusts
Medical Directors HSS Trusts
Nursing Directors HSS Trusts (*for onward
dissemination to All Nurses*)
Consultant Microbiologists
Infection Control Nurses
Regional Epidemiologists CCSC (NI)
Consultants in Communicable Disease Control, HSS
Boards
Directors of Public Health, HSS Boards

Your Ref:
Our Ref: HSS(MD)9/2007
Date: 12 April 2007

Dear Colleague

THE PREVENTION OF INFECTION CAUSED BY *CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE*

We are writing to you to highlight issues in relation to infection caused by *Clostridium Difficile*. This infection causes significant morbidity in our hospitals in Northern Ireland and has also been associated with some major adverse incidents in hospitals in the United Kingdom. 'Changing the Culture' the Department's Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Healthcare Associated Infections has highlighted the need for appropriate activity in relation to all healthcare associated infections. However we feel that it is timely to remind all healthcare workers of specific issues in relation to *Clostridium Difficile* infection.

1. Mandatory surveillance programme.

Surveillance of *Clostridium Difficile* infection has been mandatory in Northern Ireland Trusts since 1 November 2005. All Trusts are required to submit data to the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre in Northern Ireland in line with agreed regional protocols. Outbreaks of infection caused by *Clostridium Difficile* infection should be reported to the Department as a serious adverse incident association with infection.

2. Policies and Procedures

We attach for information a Good Practice Guide to Control of *Clostridium Difficile* which has been developed by the Health Protection Agency's Regional Microbiology Network at www.cdsc.org.uk. This highlights best practice in relation to *Clostridium Difficile* both in outbreak and non outbreak situations. Of note Trust policy should cover:

- Antibiotic prescribing policies to minimise the use of broad spectrum antibiotics.

