

Medical & Allied Branch
Dr Lorraine Doherty

To: Chief Executives, HSS Trusts

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Our Ref: D125-04
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Dear Colleague

Surveillance of C.difficile Infection

In December 2003 I wrote to you in relation to the surveillance of C.difficile infection asking that Trusts begin surveillance of C.difficile on a voluntary basis from 1st May 2004. This voluntary surveillance has been undertaken since that time and now appears to be underway and working well in Trusts.

From 1st January 2005 surveillance of C.difficile infection will be mandatory for all Trusts. It is envisaged that Trust Microbiologists will continue to submit data to CDSC(NI). Dr Julie McCarroll from CDSC(NI) will liaise directly with Trust laboratories in relation to the collection of this data. Surveillance of C.difficile infection remains one of the Departmental priorities in the context of control of healthcare acquired infections.

The Department is currently developing an Infection Control Strategy for the province. As part of this strategy the approach to the surveillance of healthcare acquired infections are being reviewed with a view to enhancing them. As such the Department has asked Dr Angela Jordan, Specialist Registrar in Public Health Medicine, DHSSPS, to undertake an evaluation of the current surveillance systems for healthcare acquired infections along with CDSC(NI). Dr Angela Jordan and Dr Brian Smyth will be in contact with your Trust shortly to advise you on how this evaluation will be undertaken. The results of the evaluation will be used to inform the Department's future priorities for surveillance of healthcare acquired infections.

Yours sincerely



Dr Lorraine Doherty
Senior Medical Officer (Communicable Diseases)

cc: Directors of Public Health, HSS Boards
Consultants in Communicable Disease Control, HSS Boards
Consultant Microbiologists
Dr B Smyth, Regional Epidemiologist, CDSC(NI)
Dr J McCarroll, Epidemiological Scientist, CDSC(NI)
Dr A Jordan, SpR in Public Health Medicine, DHSSPS
Mr J Dudgeon, Health Protection Team, DHSSPS
Ms D Kenny, Health Development Director, DHSSPS