FROM THE ACTING CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
Dr Ian Carson

Department of
Health, Social Services and Public Safety

An Roinn
Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí

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Your Ref:
Our Ref: iwc
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Dear Jarlath

INTRAVENOUS FLUIDS AND HYPONATRAEMIA RISK

Thank you for your recent letter to Dr Campbell enclosing the report of the Regional Fluid Therapy Working Group.

Firstly I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for chairing this group and to commend you on producing such an informative report and excellent algorithm to assist fluid management in children. On this very difficult and controversial issue you have helped provide clarity and very concise guidance to complement the Departmental guidance issued in 2002. I look forward to receiving further information regarding the audit on the draft fluid prescription sheet.

Within the Department, we need to consider the most appropriate mechanism by which guidance can be disseminated to the HPSS. In light of the NPSA consultation on *Reducing the Risk of Harm When Administering Intravenous Fluids to Children* and the safety alert expected to be issued in Summer 2006, I would favour issuing definitive guidance then, in conjunction with the NPSA alert. In the interim, however, I do intend to issue the algorithm developed by the Regional Fluid Therapy Working Group. While this may be replaced by subsequent guidance, it will continue to raise awareness of appropriate fluid management in children and promote good practice in the coming months.

You have also raised an issue regarding the availability in the UK of a number of isotonic fluids and have requested that some products licensed in other EC countries are made available in Northern Ireland. I know this has been discussed briefly at the NPSA's External Reference Group (ERG) and that the view was that evidence regarding an 'ideal' solution was, at this juncture, not sufficiently robust to request the introduction of specific solutions available in other countries. I understand, however, that this may be discussed again at the next meeting of the ERG. In this context I would want to await further

discussion and agreement on a way forward for the UK rather than proceed on a unilateral basis.

Dr Campbell and I have both appreciated your commitment on this issue and want to thank you for all your efforts.

Yours sincerely

DR IAN CARSON
Acting Chief Medical Officer