

Jim Livingstone
Director of Safety, Quality and Standards



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÁNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydënter Heisin
an Fowk Siccar**

For action:

Chief Executives of HSC Trusts
Chief Executives HSS Boards
Chief Pharmacists in HSC Trusts/Boards

For information:

Medical Directors HSC Trusts
Medical Director NIAS
Directors of Nursing HSS Boards/HSC Trusts
Directors of Public Health in HSS Boards
NI Medicines Governance Team
Directors of Dental Services in HSS Boards/HSC Trusts
Directors of Primary Care in HSS Boards for cascade to

- Prescribing advisers; and
- GP advisers

Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (for cascade to relevant regulated establishments and independent hospitals, clinics and hospices)
Professor R Hay, Head of School of Medicine and Dentistry, QUB
Professor James McElroy, Dean of Life and Health Science, UU
Professor Jean Orr CBE, Head of School of Nursing and Midwifery, QUB
Professor Sean Gorman, Head of School of Pharmacy, QUB
Dr Carol Curran, Head of School of Nursing, UU
Regional Medicines Information Service
Chief Executives NIMDTA, NICPET, NIPEC

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Circular HSC (SQSD)49/2008

Date: 17 October 2008

Dear Colleague,

NPSA Patient Safety Alert 20 – Promoting safer use of injectable medicines

Chief Medical Officer Group

Working for a Healthier People



Status: Best Practice Guidance

In June 07 the Department issued a series of alerts under Circular HSC (SQSD) 28/2007 relating to medication safety namely:-

- NPSA Alert 18 - Actions that make anticoagulant therapy safer
- NPSA Alert 19 - Promoting safer measurement and administration of liquid medicines via oral and other enteral routes
- NPSA Alert 20 - Promoting safer use of injectable medicines
- NPSA Alert 21 - Safer Practice with epidural injections and infusions

Circular HSC (SQSD) 28/2007 endorsed these four alerts for implementation across HSC, independent and regulated sector organisations by 30 June 2008.
(http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/hsc_sqsd_28-07.pdf)

The Department would now like to draw your attention to, and endorse, the Regional Working Group's recommendations for the implementation, in Northern Ireland, of NPSA Patient Safety Alert 20. A copy is attached.

You will wish to bring the contents of this document to the attention of staff, particularly those involved in governance and risk management within your organisation who need to be aware of this and similar alerts in order to assist in complying with the *Quality Standard for Health & Social Care* –

- Criterion 5.3.1(f)(viii) and (ix) (ensuring safe practice in medicines management); and
- Criterion 5.3.3(f) (implementation of evidence-based practice through guidance, for example, NPSA guidance).

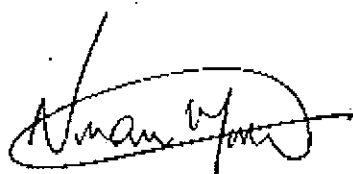
NPSA Alert 20 is available on <http://www.npsa.nhs.uk/nrls/alerts-and-directives/alerts/>

Finally, may we take this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge all the work that has been done to date to improve medication safety across health and social care.

Yours sincerely



DR JIM LIVINGSTONE
Director Safety, Quality and Standards



DR NORMAN MORROW
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer