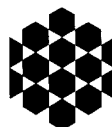


From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride



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

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

AN ROINN
**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÁNNYSTRIE O
**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin
an Fowk Siccar**

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Your Ref:
Our Ref: MME/1/2010
Date: 1 September 2010

BY EMAIL

Ms Leslie Jordan
Patient Advocate
input.diabetes@gmail.com

Dear Ms Jordan

Thank you for your e-mail of 11 August 2010 regarding insulin pump therapy and patient choice in Northern Ireland.

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland has a formal link with NICE; each piece of new guidance is reviewed for its applicability to Northern Ireland and is endorsed where appropriate. NICE TA 151 recommending insulin pump therapy has been endorsed as applicable to Northern Ireland.

NICE technology appraisals are not mandatory here, but the Department expects them to be implemented over time. Typically, HSC organisations are asked to develop plans to facilitate implementation of the guidance within 3 months of the guidance being endorsed, although the timescale for full implementation can vary. The allocation of funding for new therapies such as insulin pumps is a matter for the Health and Social Care Board, which commissions services in Northern Ireland, taking into account the demands and pressures generally for access to a wide range of new treatments and technologies.

Currently there are 191 patients on insulin pump therapy and 110 waiting to start treatment. The HSC Board has allocated additional funding of £225,000 this year to enable the health service to start 60 patients on insulin pumps.

With regard to patients' right to choose which hospital they receive treatment from, Northern Ireland patients do not have a legal right to choose which hospital they are treated at. However, it has been customary for patient preferences to be accommodated where possible within the Northern Ireland health system. The decision to refer a patient to hospital for investigation or treatment will be influenced by the patient's condition and its severity and also by patient preference. Patients will typically discuss treatment options with their general practitioner in reaching a decision about the appropriate referral and treatment. Within the health service, patients may request that they are referred to a specific hospital for treatment.

I hope you find this information helpful; please accept my assurance that the Department will continue to seek additional resources to improve access to therapies which offer the potential for significant improvement in patient care, including insulin pump therapy.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael McBride', written in a cursive style.

DR MICHAEL McBRIDE
Chief Medical Officer