

From the Acting Chief Medical Officer  
Dr Elizabeth Mitchell



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

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**URGENT COMMUNICATION**

HSS(MD)19/2009

All General Practitioner s (*for onward distribution to practice staff*)  
Family Practitioner Service Leads (*for distribution to GP Out of Hours services*)  
Chief Executive, Health & Social Care Board  
Chief Executive, Public Health Agency  
Ms Andree McCollum, Health & Social Care Board  
Dr Sloan Harper, Health & Social Care Board  
Directors of Pharmacy, HSC Trusts  
All Community Pharmacists  
Director of Public Health, Public Health Agency (*for onward dissemination to Health Protection staff and Emergency Centre Operation staff*)  
Dr Jill Mairs, Regional Procurement Pharmacist

AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta  
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÄNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydënter Heisin  
an Fowk Siccar**

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Your Ref:

Our Ref: HSS(MD)19/2009

Date: 14 May 2009

Dear Colleague

**ACCESS TO ANTIVIRALS FOR TREATMENT OF CASES OF SWINE FLU AND  
PROPHYLAXIS OF CLOSE CONTACTS**

We are writing to advise you of a change of policy to streamline access to antivirals for treatment of cases and prophylaxis for close contacts of Swine Flu infection. To date GPs who require antiviral medication for cases and contacts have had to access this on authorisation from the Public Health Agency from a range of different services including Trust A&E Departments and Out of Hours Centres.

From 15 May 2009 antiviral medication for those who require either treatment or prophylaxis will be able to be accessed at a local community pharmacy on production of a relevant prescription from the GP, including appropriate authorisation. General Practitioners, having discussed the patient with public health staff at the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) at the Public Health Agency will be able to prescribe antivirals on a HS21 prescription which includes an authorisation code. GPs will get an authorisation code from the EOC and will be required to enter this code on HS21 prescription which can be taken to the local community pharmacy to be filled from the primer antiviral supplies distributed to all Community Pharmacists last week. Only those prescriptions bearing an authorisation code can be filled from these dedicated supplies. Stocks of antivirals will continue to be held at GP Out of Hours Centres and Accident and Emergency Departments to facilitate easy access to antivirals outside of normal working hours. Full operational details on these arrangements will be sent to you as soon as possible by the HSC Board.



Copy  
CNO  
DCMO  
Dr Doherty  
Dr Reaney  
Dr Mc Carthy  
Andrew Elliott  
Christine Jendoubi  
John Farrell  
Cathy Harrison  
Bernie Duffy  
Sholto Carnew