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To all dentists in Northern Ireland

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Dear Colleague

Endorsement of SDCEP ‘Oral Health Management of Patients at Risk of Medication-related Osteonecrosis of the Jaw’ (March 2017)

You will be aware, from our letter of April last year, of the Scottish Dental Clinical Effectiveness Programme (SDCEP) a NICE-accredited organisation which aims to provide user-friendly, evidence-based guidance to support dental teams. SDCEP has been producing such guidance since 2006 for the profession in Scotland, though dental professionals in other parts of the UK would often refer to it as a useful source of information on clinical matters. Last year we accepted SDCEP’s offer to the other United Kingdom regions to formally endorse reviews of guidance, and to participate in the development of new guidance. This commenced with ‘Drug Prescribing for Dentistry’, which was formally endorsed here by the aforementioned letter and was also endorsed in Wales.

We are now very pleased to announce the Department’s endorsement of the SDCEP 2017 guidance ‘Oral Health Management of Patients at Risk of Medication-related Osteonecrosis of the Jaw’ which updates and replaces SDCEP’s 2011 guidance ‘Oral Health Management of Patients Prescribed Bisphosphonates’. We believe that the recommendations, advice and information within this new guidance will be very helpful to support dental practitioners in their management of patients taking anti-resorptive or anti-angiogenic drugs. This guidance is mainly aimed at dentists in primary care dental practice, but will also be of relevance to the secondary care dental services, those involved in dental education, undergraduate trainees, prescribers and dispensers of these medicines, and patients taking these medicines.

A letter was issued to practitioners in December 2006, by the then Acting Chief Dental Officer and Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, advising of an increasing incidence of osteonecrosis of the jaws associated with Bisphosphonates as reported by oral surgeons. This led to a guidance development process through a group convened by the then DHSSPS comprising of dental, medical and pharmaceutical professionals. This was issued here in July 2009 as ‘Guidance on Osteonecrosis associated with Bisphosphonate

usage' HSC (SQSD) 54/2009. **The SDCEP 'Oral Health Management of Patients at Risk of Medication-related Osteonecrosis of the Jaw' (March 2017), now replaces that guidance.**

The new guidance, as published in March of this year, can be found on the SDCEP website or be viewed directly via the link <http://www.sdcep.org.uk/published-guidance/medication-related-osteonecrosis-of-the-jaw/>.

The SDCEP website offers three different formats by which the guidance can be downloaded:

- Full Guidance – providing comprehensive background information, recommendations and practical advice
- Guidance in Brief – summarising the main recommendations from the full guidance, and
- Guidance for Prescribers and Dispensers - highlighting the recommendations relevant to those who prescribe and dispense anti-resorptive and anti-angiogenic drugs

A number of supporting tools are also available which should assist dental team to implement the guidance recommendations:

- Information Leaflets for Patients
- A patient Risk Assessment Flowchart
- A Flowchart on Managing the Oral Health of Patients at Risk of Medication-related Osteonecrosis of the Jaw
- A useful PowerPoint Slide Set (14 slides) summarising the key messages from the guidance
- And a List of Drugs Associated with MRONJ

We believe that all of these resources are potentially very useful and would advise you and your colleagues to visit the SDCEP website to see the full range of background information.

It is also noteworthy that the BNF, itself a useful source of guidance, has previously referred to SDCEP guidance on Bisphosphonates.

Please just be aware that as this is primarily a Scottish guidance document some of the material, processes, organisations etc. described in it are not applicable here. Also, that other SDCEP guidance has not yet been endorsed as guidance for best practice here in Northern Ireland. However, From the CDO perspective, Simon is again very grateful to colleagues in SDCEP for this further collaborative opportunity and hopes that the Department will be able to avail of a similar process to introduce other clinical dental guidance here in due course for the benefit of dental teams.

We trust you will find this guidance to be helpful and will utilise it as a valuable aid to enhancing patient care.

Yours sincerely



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