

**From the Chief Medical Officer  
Dr Michael McBride**



Department of  
**Health**

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

[www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

**HSS(MD) 17/2020**

**For Action:**

Chief Executives, Public Health Agency / Health and Social Care Board / HSC Trusts / NIAS  
Director of Integrated Care, Health and Social Care Board (for onward distribution to general practices and community pharmacies)  
All General Practitioners and GP Locums (for onward distribution to practice staff)  
OOHs Medical Managers (for onward distribution to staff)  
**PLEASE SEE ATTACHED FULL CIRCULATION LIST**

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Our Ref: HSS(MD) 17/2020

Date: 27 March 2020

Dear Colleague

**COVID-19 – CHLOROQUINE AND HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE NOT LICENSED FOR COVID-19 TREATMENT**

Recent media reports have suggested that chloroquine can protect patients from coronavirus or treat COVID-19. Chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine are not licensed for the treatment of COVID-19 related symptoms or the prevention of COVID-19 infection.

A number of clinical trials are ongoing to test chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine as an agent in the treatment and prevention of COVID-19.

Until we have clear, definitive evidence on the safety and efficacy of these treatments. They should only be prescribed or supplied within the context of a clinical trial within a controlled research environment.

This position will be kept under constant review in line with emerging research. A copy of this letter will be available on the Department's website as well as the latest information relating to COVID-19 – <http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Yours sincerely

**DR MICHAEL McBRIDE**  
Chief Medical Officer

**MRS CATHY HARRISON**  
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

