

21 October 2010

*Wellington House  
133-155 Waterloo Road  
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To: Renal Clinical Directors  
Renal Nurses  
Transplant Teams  
Heads of Infection Control Teams  
Lead Microbiologist/Virologist for NHS Trusts

**Gateway reference no: 14544**

Dear Colleague

### **Prevention and Control of Blood-borne Virus Infection – Addendum, Guidelines for Dialysis Away From Base**

The Government's vision for the NHS is that "patients will be at the heart of everything we do. So they will have more choice and control ... making decisions about their care ... There will be a relentless focus on clinical outcomes. Success will be measured, not through bureaucratic process targets, but against results that really matter to patients".

It is important that patients on haemodialysis are able to have as good a quality of life as possible by making it easier for them to dialyse away from their base. Dialysing Away From Base may be for many reasons, for example to spend a few days with family or friends when there is a new baby or a bereavement; to receive or provide support following hospital admission or illness; to take a holiday; to visit a client or attend a conference for work or attend a course of education.

The differing interpretations of the Department of Health (DH) 2002 guidelines, *Good Practice Guidelines for Renal Dialysis/Transplantation Units – Prevention and Control of Blood-borne Virus Infection* have led to some organisational and institutional barriers to enabling haemodialysis patients to travel freely within and outside the UK. For most people the facility to travel within the UK and abroad is generally taken for granted but, for people receiving haemodialysis, there are not only physical and psychological issues but also complex blood-borne virus testing protocols that make travel more difficult. Over recent years, these restrictions have been a continuing worry for kidney patients.

In 2009, the Department of Health set up a Working Group to clarify good practice recommendations but still based upon DH's 2002 guidance for dialysing away from base.

The Working Group made up of key experts on blood-borne virus infection and dialysis, including renal consultants and nurses, the Health Protection Agency, consultant virologists and microbiologists and patient representatives have produced the attached revised guidelines specifically on dialysing away from base.

It is important to note that this addendum recommends the segregation of patients with hepatitis C as recommended in DH's 2002 guidelines. This is because there is a continued need to be vigilant to prevent cross infection.

The revised guidelines should enable renal units to keep to a minimum the restrictions placed on people wishing to have dialysis away from their normal base and therefore increase their quality of life.

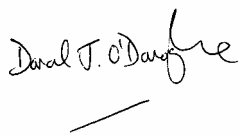
We would be grateful if you drew this information to the attention of relevant staff and patients.

Extra copies of the Addendum can be requested by post from:

The Renal NSF Team  
Department of Health  
Room 403, Wellington House  
133-155 Waterloo Road  
London SE1 8UG

Alternatively, you can download a pdf copy from the DH's website,  
[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_4005752](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4005752)

Yours sincerely



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