

News release



26 September 2005

BUGWATCH AT DAISY HILL HOSPITAL

The Southern Health & Social Services Council (SHSSC) has completed its Bugwatch survey at Daisy Hill Hospital and has given it the 'all clear' as far as ward hygiene. Bugwatch is designed to allow the SHSSC to monitor infection prevention and control measures at ward level and to raise public and patient awareness of healthcare associated infection (HCAI). The survey at Daisy Hill Hospital was one of eight surveys conducted by the four Health and Social Services Councils at acute hospitals across Northern Ireland during Bugwatch week.

Mrs Lynne Cairns, Chairman of the SHSSC, speaking after the survey reported, "The Council was most satisfied with the results of the Bugwatch survey at Daisy Hill Hospital. The general standard of hygiene on the two wards that our teams visited was extremely high. A full report on our findings will be provided to the hospital. This will contain many positives and raise one or two issues for further discussion."

The Bugwatch survey focused on practical ways in which HCAI can be prevented and controlled at ward level. Mrs Cairns adds, "One of the most important ways to combat HCAI is handwashing. As part of our survey we were pleased to note that all staff observed washed their

hands or used sanitising gel between patients or between different caring tasks for the same patient. The results of the Bugwatch survey will assist the Council in representing the public interest in further developments at part of the new NI Infection Control Strategy."

The SHSSC wants to stress that everyone has a part to play in the prevention and control of HCAI. Mrs Stella Cunningham, Chief Officer of the SHSSC, comments, "We hope that Bugwatch will encourage patients and visitors to work in partnership with hospital staff. Evidence shows that this is the best way to prevent and control infection."

Results of the Bugwatch surveys across Northern Ireland will be available by mid-October on the HSSC joint website on www.hsscouncils.org

Ends

Notes to Editors:

- NI Infection Control Strategy

'Protecting Patients and Staff: A Strategy for Prevention and Control of Healthcare Associated Infections in Northern Ireland 2005-2010' has been developed by the DHSSPS. The four Health & Social Services Councils have been represented at Working Group level and have been actively involved in the pre-consultation stage of the Strategy.

Bugwatch surveys (based on a model developed by the Commission for Public and Patient Involvement in Health in England) will be undertaken by the four Councils to respond to public concerns about healthcare acquired infection rates. This has been planned as part of the four Health & Social Services Council's work programme, which includes the lay monitoring of Health and Personal Social Services facilities. It coincides with the development of the Northern Ireland Infection Control Strategy 'Protecting Patients & Staff'.

The Bugwatch survey involves observation of hygiene and related procedures such as availability of hand washing or cleansing facilities on wards, displaying of advice to visitors, etc. The findings of the survey will inform the Councils' ongoing work in representing the public in relation to infection control.

- **The Southern Health and Social Services Council is one of 4 Health and Social Services Councils set up in 1991 to represent the views of patients and users of the health and social services. The Council has a total of 24 members, 40% of whom are nominated by District Councils in the Southern Area. The remainder are appointed by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety – 30% voluntary/community representatives and 30% are nominees with an interest in health and social care.**
- **Health and Social Services Councils have a right to be consulted by Health and Social Services Boards about and plans for development of services, or where significant changes are being**

considered. Councils play an important part in representing the views of consumers of services to the decision makers, and provide advice and support to patients and service users in relation to complaints procedures.

**If you require any further information please contact :
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The Council's website address is: www.shsscouncil.net