Dear Colleague

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER’S TASK FORCE ON HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATED INFECTION

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT ON THE TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CLEANING PROCESSES TO BE USED IN NHS SPECIFICATIONS FOR CLEANING SERVICES

I am writing to seek your views on a piece of work which is important for individual NHS bodies in Scotland and for the NHS as a whole – a consultation document setting out a proposed cleaning specification for healthcare premises across the NHS in Scotland.

Healthcare associated infection (HAI) is a priority issue for NHSScotland. The profile of prevention and control of HAI has been transformed within the past few years in Scotland - significant milestones specifically relating to cleaning include, “A Clean Bill of Health? A review of domestic services in Scottish Hospitals”, Audit Scotland (April 2000); the NHSQIS/CSBS HAI: Cleaning Services Standards (June 2002); the Ministerial HAI Action Plan, “Preventing infections acquired while receiving health care” (October 2002); the Audit Scotland review of cleaning services and NHSQIS review of HAI: Infection Control Standards (both published January 2003).

A major programme of work to improve the prevention and control of HAI across the NHS in Scotland was laid out in the Scottish Executive Health Department’s Ministerial Action Plan on HAI. This programme is now being actioned by the Scottish HAI Task Force, of which I am the chair.

The HAI Task Force is both overseeing existing work in progress and commissioning several new working groups to address the many tasks specified in the Action Plan. One of the immediate priorities is the development of updated technical requirements for rigorous and effective cleaning processes to be used in NHS specifications for cleaning services.
The enclosed consultation document (see http://www.scotland.gov.uk/views/views.asp) has been developed by an HAI Task Force multidisciplinary working group under the chair of Heather Knox, Director of Facilities, Ayrshire and Arran Primary Care NHS Trust. Following the consultation which this letter launches, the working group will take account of all views expressed and will move forward to finalise agreed national technical requirements for cleaning processes for use in NHS specifications for cleaning services.

In the interim period before the technical requirements are finalised, the HAI Task Force recommends that NHS bodies use the draft attached to this letter as interim guidance.

Cleaning services staff are an essential part of the multidisciplinary approach to increased public, patient and staff safety. A key message from the HAI Task Force is that hygiene, particularly clean hands and clean hospitals, is everyone’s responsibility, in the prevention and control of infection.

I would therefore welcome your organisation’s views on this consultation document. In particular, it would be helpful if your response could be structured to answer the following questions: -

- The scope and content of this consultation document, in particular (a) the section on staff training and development and (b) the section on performance management;
- The format and clarity of the document;
- The format of the final document;
- Whether there are any gaps in the information provided;
- The role of members of the public in monitoring the performance of cleaning services.

Please note that all responses to this consultation may be made public, unless a respondent requests that their views be kept confidential.

Please submit your responses to Christopher Bergin, Secretariat, HAI Task Force, Room 2EN, St Andrew’s House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, christopher.bergin@scotland.gsi.gov.uk. The consultation period will end on 5 September 2003.

Yours sincerely

DR E M ARMSTRONG
To:

Chief Executives of NHS Boards and Trusts
Chief Executive of The State Hospital
Chief Executive of the Scottish Ambulance Service
Directors of Public Health
Medical and Nursing Directors of NHS Boards and Trusts
Chairs of clinical governance committees
Senior Managers for Infection Control (HDL 2001(10))
Consultants in Public Health Medicine (Communicable Disease and Environmental Health)
Consultant Microbiologists
Consultants in Infectious Disease
Infection Control Nurses
Infection Control Doctors
Directors of Estates and Facilities
Hotel Services Managers
Risk Managers
LHCC General Managers

HAI Task Force Members
HAI Task Force Working Group 7 Members

Age Concern
Association of Domestic Management
Audit Scotland
British Geriatric Society
British Medical Association
Capability Scotland
The Care Commission
Chartered Society of Allied Health Professionals
Community Health Exchange
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
The Health and Safety Executive
Help the Aged
Hospices in Scotland registered with the Care Commission
Hospitals in Scotland registered with the Care Commission
Huntington Disease Society
The Independent Healthcare Association
Infection Control Nurses’ Association (Scotland)
Local Authority Directors of Social Work
Local Health Councils
MIND
Motor Neurone Disease Society
Multiple Sclerosis Society
Muscular Dystrophy Society
National Osteoporosis Society
National Resource Centre for Ethnic Minority Health
NHS Education Scotland
NHS Quality Improvement Scotland
Property and Environment Forum Executive
Public Health Infection Control Nurses’ (Scotland) Group
Regional Voluntary Councils
Royal Colleges
Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland
Scottish Action on Dementia
Scottish Association of Health Councils
Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health
Scottish Consumer Council
Scottish Human Services Trust
SENSE Scotland
Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists
The Stroke Association
Volunteer Development Scotland