

PRESS RELEASE

NICE LAUNCHES NEW APPROACH TO GUIDANCE DISSEMINATION

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) is taking some of its own medicine as it puts into practice new and better ways of disseminating its guidance to its stakeholders. More used to providing guidance on treatments and care for healthcare professionals, patients and the public in England and Wales, NICE recently turned the spotlight on itself with the widest ever review of its dissemination practices. The result sees today's launch of new shorter NICE guidance for time-poor health professionals and a greater emphasis on allowing stakeholders a choice between guidance formats and mode of delivery.

Announcing the launch of NICE's new modular approach to dissemination **Louise Fish**, acting head of communications at NICE, said: "NICE will release over 130 pieces of guidance between now and 2005. How NICE communicates this information to its stakeholders is critical in driving the excellence agenda through the NHS. The dissemination review helped us to identify what we do well, and what we need to do better. One of the key findings was that, not surprisingly, one size does not fit all; stakeholders differ in terms of what information they want to receive from NICE and how they want to receive it. Our review was extensive and addressed a number of complex issues. Ultimately it has given us a clear direction for excellence in communication which we welcome. Above all this new approach reflects the current trend of increasing IT accessibility amongst healthcare professionals by making better use of electronic and web-based dissemination."

From this month NICE will be producing a quick reference version of its Technology Appraisal guidance. Available electronically via email or in print format, this document contains the guidance (Section 1 of the full guidance), together with brief details on implementation as well as signposting to further information – for example, the full guidance, information for the public and related guidance. The full guidance will now only be available electronically and via the NICE website. From January 2004, NICE will also be producing a quick reference version of its Clinical Guidelines. To support this new approach the NICE website (www.nice.org.uk) is being redesigned to include a comprehensive suite of supporting and background information on each piece of guidance as soon as it is published.

Also from January 2004, NICE is launching a guidance module aimed specifically at GPs. Called *Update for Primary Care*, it will contain the quick reference versions of all NICE technology appraisal guidance relevant to primary care. GPs and other health professionals working in primary care will also receive quick reference versions of NICE clinical guidelines relevant to primary care.

In order to facilitate this modular approach to NICE guidance dissemination and to ensure that stakeholders are provided with the guidance relevant to their needs, in the format of their choice, the Institute is developing a fully relational mailing database. The database will enable stakeholders to choose between different guidance products and methods of dissemination (i.e. electronic or conventional) and amend their details and preferences through regular feedback mechanisms (both electronic or conventional). Recruitment to the NICE mailing database commenced with the inclusion of a response form in today's guidance mailing.

Ends

Notes to Editors

About NICE

1. NICE is part of the NHS. It is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on treatments and care for those using the NHS in England and Wales. Its guidance is for healthcare professionals and patients and their carers to help them

make decisions about treatment and healthcare. For further information about NICE you can visit www.nice.org.uk.

2. NICE produces guidance in three areas of health:
 - the use of new and existing medicines and treatments within the NHS in England and Wales – technology appraisals
 - the appropriate treatment and care of patients with specific diseases and conditions within the NHS in England and Wales – clinical guidelines.
 - whether interventional procedures used for diagnosis or treatment are safe enough and work well enough for routine use– interventional procedures.
3. NICE also funds three enquiries that undertake research into the way patients are treated to identify ways of improving the quality of care (the investigations are known as confidential enquiries).
4. NICE guidance and recommendations are prepared by independent groups that include professionals working in the NHS and people who are familiar with the issues affecting patients and carers.