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PRESS RELEASE

**NICE PUBLISHES NEW TECHNOLOGY APPRAISAL
PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY**

NICE has published updated documentation describing its technology appraisal methods and process and the associated appeal process.

The Institute consulted widely with the NHS, patient organisations and industry, and draft documents were made available for public comment. The final versions have been published following consideration of the comments received from these stakeholders, as well as the recommendations of a recent WHO review of the appraisal programme.

The result of this work is a set of documents describing a world-class technology evaluation process. Enhancements include:

- Improved pre-appraisal scoping of the topic;
- More time for consultation on appraisal documents;
- More detailed description of methods of evaluating clinical and economic evidence, incorporating the use of a reference case;
- More information about how appraisal committees determine the cost effectiveness of technologies.

The process and methodology documents will be followed later in 2004 by 'how to' guides to support or manufacturers and sponsors, patient groups and the NHS when they are submitting evidence to NICE.

The Department of Health and the Welsh Assembly Government refer topics to NICE in batches or 'waves'. All appraisal topics that were referred to NICE in the 9th wave and those that will be referred in the 10th wave will be appraised using a hybrid of the existing appraisal process and the new process. The hybrid process will combine the scoping process from the existing appraisal process with the remainder of the new process. All appraisal topics that are referred to NICE from the 11th wave onwards will be appraised using the full new process, and the new methodology document will also apply to these appraisals.

Andrew Dillon, Chief Executive at NICE, said: "The recent WHO report acknowledges the NICE appraisal process as an important model for technology appraisals internationally. Together with the experience accumulated over our first 5 years of operation, these new arrangements consolidate our position as a world leader in health technology evaluation."

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.

About NICE technology appraisals

5. Technology appraisals are recommendations on the use of new and existing medicines and treatments within the NHS in England and Wales, such as:
 - medicines (for example, drugs)
 - medical devices (for example, hearing aids or inhalers)
 - diagnostic techniques (tests used to identify diseases)
 - surgical procedures (for example, repairing hernias)
 - health promotion activities (for example, patient education models for diabetes).
6. Our technology appraisal recommendations are prepared by an independent Committee, who include healthcare professionals working in the NHS and people who are familiar with the issues affecting patients and carers. The Committee considers the evidence on the clinical and cost effectiveness of the technology – this includes hearing the views of, and evidence from, clinical health professionals, experts and patients.
7. NHS organisations in England and Wales have to make the resources and facilities available to enable NICE guidance to be implemented. In January 2002 the Government announced a legal obligation for the NHS to provide funding for treatments and drugs recommended by NICE as a part of its technology appraisals work programme

About the technology appraisal process documents

8. The following documents are available on the NICE website at www.nice.org.uk/ :
 - Guide to the Technology Appraisal Process
 - Technology Appraisal Process Guidance for Appellants
 - Guide to the Methods of Technology Appraisal