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**National Institute for
Clinical Excellence**

Mid City Place
71 High Holborn
London
WC1V 6NA

Tel: 020 7067 5800
Fax: 020 7067 5801
nice@nice.nhs.uk

www.nice.org.uk

PRESS STATEMENT

NICE responds to Department of Health and Welsh Assembly Government advice to NHS on fertility

Speaking in response to the advice issued to NHS organisations on implementation of the Institute's guidance on fertility treatment by the Department of Health and Welsh Assembly Government, **Andrew Dillon, NICE Chief Executive, said:**

"Full implementation of the guideline will take time, and the government's advice to NHS organisations on a stepped approach to improving access to IVF treatment makes sense."

He continued: "We are glad to see an expectation that the NHS will move to full implementation of our guidance in the longer term, and in the interests of people with fertility problems it is important that this happens as quickly as possible."

Ends

Notes to Editors

About implementation of the guideline on fertility

1. The Institute's remit is to develop guidelines for the NHS that outline which treatments work best and offer best value to the NHS. The implementation of the Institute's guidance on fertility is a matter for government and the NHS at a local level.
2. The Department of Health has stated that it expects PCTs to: offer all women aged 23-39 who meet the NICE clinical criteria a minimum of one full cycle of IVF from April 2005; give priority to couples who do not already have a child living with them, and; to make progress towards full implementation of the guideline in the longer term. For further information visit www.dh.gov.uk.

3. The Welsh Assembly Government has stated that it expects Health Commission Wales to meet the provision of one cycle of treatment for women aged 23-39 who meet the clinical criteria established by NICE from April 2005, and; to make continued progress in implementing the full NICE guidelines. The Welsh Assembly Government will be developing and consulting on social criteria over the coming months. For further information visit www.wales.gov.uk.

About the clinical guideline

4. The guideline asks local health communities to review their existing management of the treatment of fertility against this guideline. The review should consider the resources required to implement the recommendations set out in the guideline, the people and processes involved, and the timeline over which full implementation is envisaged. It is in the interests of patients that the implementation timeline is as rapid as possible. Relevant local clinical guidelines, care pathways and protocols should be reviewed in the light of this guidance and revised accordingly.
5. NICE has commissioned an independent report on the potential costs of implementing this guideline. A copy of the report is available from our website at www.nice.org.uk/CG011.
6. Further information on the fertility guideline is available from www.nice.org.uk/CG011

About NICE

7. 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.
8. 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.

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).

9. 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.