



8 June 2009

Health and Social Care Regulator welcomes MRSA Study

Glenn Houston, Chief Executive of RQIA - Northern Ireland's independent regulator of health and social care services - today welcomed the findings of a Queen's University study on MRSA rates in nursing homes in the Northern Trust area.

Glenn Houston said: **"Health care associated infections such as MRSA are one of the biggest challenges facing health and social care services, and this research has important implications for all those involved with these services."**

Mr Houston continued: **"RQIA places a strong emphasis on infection control - both in its inspection and review activities. This year, infection control is RQIA's key inspection theme, focusing on care practices supported by appropriate policies, staff training and awareness, and detailed inspection of the care home environment."**

"During the past year the 61 nursing homes in the Northern Trust area received over 220 inspections by RQIA staff to examine the quality of life, care, environment and management at the homes. Copies of these inspection reports are available to the public from individual homes or on request from RQIA."

Practical guidance on infection prevention and control for health and social care providers is available on RQIA's website, www.rqia.org.uk. This includes advice and guidance on dealing with MRSA, clostridium difficile and swine flu, and an e-learning programme on infection control.

RQIA's Chief Executive concluded: **"RQIA's key priority is the protection of vulnerable people, and we are focused on delivering a robust regulatory framework for all health and social care services."**

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For further information:

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Editors' Notes

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority, established in April 2005 under *The Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003*, is the independent health and social care regulatory body for Northern Ireland. In its work RQIA encourages continuous improvement in the quality and availability of health and social care services through a programme of inspections and reviews.

QUB MRSA Study: December 2005 to August 2006

The findings of a study by Queen's University Belfast and Antrim Area Hospital on MRSA colonisation in nursing home residents and staff carried out from December 2005 to August 2006 have been published.

The paper entitled *Prevalence of Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) Colonization in Residents and Staff in Nursing Homes in Northern Ireland*, appeared in the April 2009 edition of the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society. Volume 57, number 4.