

From the Office of David Flory CBE
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11th January 2011
Gateway ref 15352

To: PCT commissioners

Dear Colleague

Commissioning of NHS IVF Services

I am writing to update PCT commissioners on the Coalition Government's position on the provision of infertility treatment. There has been some press coverage and Parliamentary interest in this, in the light of the small number of PCTs addressing current financial challenges that have temporarily suspended local NHS provision of IVF services.

As you will know, in 2004 NICE produced a clinical guideline *Fertility: assessment and treatment for people with fertility problems*. This has proven to be a significant development in the management of infertility, appreciated across the UK by commissioners and people who need fertility treatment. The NHS has had since then to meet the challenges of implementation.

NICE is currently reviewing the guideline and its provisional timetable suggests that a final publication of any revisions will be in 2012. In the meantime, it is important that those involved in commissioning fertility services have regard to the guideline as it currently stands, including its recommendation that up to three cycles of IVF be offered to eligible couples where the woman is aged between 23 and 39.

I am aware that many PCTs have made successful progress in implementing the existing NICE recommendations. I hope that their achievements can inspire those who have not yet made the same progress to move more rapidly towards implementation.

The Department of Health has published a guide for commissioners, which was produced in partnership with some of the key experts in the field. This can be found at:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_111363

You might also wish to use this together with access criteria developed and published by Infertility Network UK (IN UK), which can be found at:

<http://www.infertilitynetworkuk.com>

The Department is also supporting an IN UK project to promote best practice in infertility service commissioning. If you have not yet been involved in this, I would encourage your lead commissioners to engage in dialogue with INUK.

I hope you will find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Flory". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David Flory
Deputy NHS Chief Executive