



## Press Release March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2012

### **New Severe Bleeding Disorder Alert Cards may save lives**

Severe Bleeding Disorder Alert Cards have been issued to persons with severe Haemophilia to assist hospital staff to ensure these patients get immediate appropriate treatment for their condition in hospital Emergency Departments.

The new cards have been issued by Specialist Treatment Centres for the condition at the National Centre for Hereditary Coagulation Disorders, St James's Hospital, Dublin, Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin, Dublin and Cork University Hospital.

The card will alert Emergency Department staff that the individual has a severe bleeding disorder and give contact details for one of the Specialist Treatment Centres.

The HSE has contacted the country's acute hospitals making them aware that if a person with severe haemophilia attends at their Emergency Department, they may carry the card. The cards give contact numbers where expert advice can be obtained on immediate treatment required.

People with severe Haemophilia need to be treated with factor concentrates for any bleeding episode without delay and each hospital in the State stocks an emergency supply of these medications.

"People with severe Haemophilia presenting at Emergency Departments have, on some occasions, had a delay of several hours before being treated with these vital medications. This could have led to permanent damage or even death," said Brian O' Mahony, Chief Executive of the Irish Haemophilia Society.

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“People with severe Haemophilia need to be triaged immediately and treated with factor concentrates for any bleeding episode without delay even in advance of carrying out scans or other diagnostic tests. The Specialist Treatment Centres have issued all patients with severe haemophilia with Alert Cards which advise Emergency Department staff to contact the Specialist Centre without delay if they present,” he added.

To minimise the risk of delayed treatment the IHS and the HSE are working together to ensure that staff in the hospital Emergency Departments are aware of the cards and the reason for them. The IHS produced the cards for the Specialist Treatment Centres.

“Contacting the Specialist Centre immediately should ensure that the appropriate treatment is administered without delay and may save lives” said Dr. Barry White, HSE National Director for Clinical Strategy and Programmes.

Brian O’Mahony, Chief Executive of the Irish Haemophilia Society added: “If a person with haemophilia attends an Emergency Department and shows this card, we want the staff to immediately phone the expert centre to get advice on appropriate treatment. A simple phone call can save lives or prevent serious or permanent damage.”

IHS member Gerard O Reilly, who has severe haemophilia, welcomed the introduction of the card saying: “I am aware that, in the event of an accident or trauma, I may have to attend a hospital which is not a specialist Haemophilia treatment centre. The Severe Bleeding Disorder Alert card is always in my wallet and may save my life if it means I am treated in a timely manner.”

The Irish Haemophilia Society represents people with haemophilia, von Willebrands Disease and related bleeding disorders. The Society hold their Annual Conference this weekend in Kilkenny. The Conference will be attended by over 230 people with bleeding

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disorders and their families. The conference will hear from national and international lecturers on topics including clinical trials, mild Haemophilia and the future of the Irish health service.

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