

PE1505/P

Petitioner Email of 17 May 2015

Dear Chris,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the response from The Scottish Government.

I am encouraged that they would expect clinicians to discuss testing for Group B Streptococcus with the patient, if the patient had concerns or had asked to be tested, and explain the current professional guidance by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the UK National Screening Committee. Do they have any evidence that this is happening?

Likewise I am encouraged that the *Ready Steady Baby!* refresh started on 1 April 2015. I look forward to being consulted in the process and given sufficient time to engage in a meaningful way on the sections on group B Strep, as stated by the Chief Executive of NHS Health Scotland in his letter to the Public Petitions Committee dated 9 December 2014.

I remain concerned that the Scottish Government is refusing to consider the issue of group B Strep prevention specifically for the Scottish population, deferring to the UK National Screening Committee. The latest data from Scotland shows a rate of early-onset GBS infection of 0.44 per 1,000 live births in 2014, which is 16% higher than the 0.38 per 1,000 live births reported in England, Wales & Northern Ireland for 2013. Why are we failing to address this heightened risk for our population?

I understand the UK National Screening Committee is due to look again at the issue of antenatal group B Strep screening in 2015/6. Would the Scottish Government give their assurance that that the Scottish representative on the UK National Screening Committee will both a) reflect on the wishes of the Scottish Parliament and b) take into consideration the specific Scottish incidence rates when contributing to the deliberations?

The Scottish Government has repeated its expectation that clinicians should test for group B Strep in specific situations. Will they be reminding NHS Boards of the importance of doing this? And what steps will they take to ensure the test used in such situations is indeed the ECM test?

Yours sincerely

Jackie Watt