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To:
Chief Executives, Primary Care Trusts

For Information Only:
Chief Executives, Strategic Health Authorities

Gateway number: 3799

8 September 2004

Dear Chief Executive,

NHS Oral Health Surveys 2004/2005

I am writing to inform you that at my August meeting with the dental leads from Strategic Health Authorities it was agreed that for 2004/05, 10/11-year-old children (Year 6) should be surveyed in place of twelve-year-old children as previously. In most cases, except where there are middle schools in the locality, this will be the final year of junior schools.

It was also agreed that 14-year-old children would cease to be surveyed in future as part of the NHS core oral health epidemiology programme.

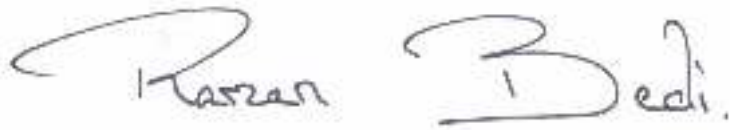
In agreeing this change, we accepted the advice of the national survey coordinators who believe that moving to this new age group will resolve many of the issues in relation to access difficulties in secondary schools and will also ensure that there is UK synchronisation with respect to the programme. We also agreed that it would be important for PCTs to time the surveys appropriately in order to avoid the term in which pupils took their SATS tests.

The Department of Health and SHAs will be reviewing the outcomes of this modification to the core oral health survey programme next year before agreeing to a permanent change.

The Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 places a duty on PCTs in relation to Dental Public Health functions. The NHS oral health surveys have been and will increasingly become an important source of local health needs information for PCTs as they begin to undertake local commissioning of dental services. I would therefore recommend that PCTs continue to commission these surveys.

I shall be arranging for all Consultants in Dental Public Health in England to be advised of the changes to the national survey programme and suggesting that this information be cascaded to Clinical Directors of Salaried/Community Dental Services

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Raman Bedi." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and a distinct 'B'.

Professor Raman Bedi
Chief Dental Officer