

February 2009

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## **UK Ends Reciprocal Health Agreement with Channel Islands**

Most Jersey people who need medical treatment whilst visiting the UK will have to pay for it from 31 March 2009.

The Health and Social Services department has received confirmation from the Right Honourable Dawn Primarolo MP, the Minister of State for the Department of Health, of the UK's decision to withdraw from the Reciprocal Health Agreement.

From 1 April 2009, a Jersey resident who has an accident or falls ill while in the UK will still receive free treatment in an Accident and Emergency department (A&E) but will be charged for operations, out-patient appointments, treatment on a hospital ward and any other services needed as a result of the incident, including repatriation to Jersey.

The decision will also affect people visiting the Island from the UK. Visitors will continue to receive free treatment at A&E but will have to pay for the same services as Jersey residents will be charged for when receiving treatment in the UK.

The Minister for Health and Social Services, Senator Jim Perchard said: "I'm very disappointed by the UK's decision to end the Reciprocal Health Agreement. We had hoped they would delay the decision so that we would have enough time to communicate these substantial changes to both Islanders and UK visitors.

"The end of this agreement has a potentially far-reaching impact for Islanders. We strongly advise Jersey residents to ensure that they have comprehensive health

insurance for future visits to the UK – just as they would when going abroad on holiday.”

These changes will not affect Islanders who are referred for treatment in the UK by the Health and Social Services department. That treatment is already paid for by the department and will continue to be so. Jersey students undertaking higher education courses in the UK will also continue to have free NHS treatment.

People who already have private health insurance are being advised to check their policy details as it may not cover travel to the UK. These changes are only with the UK and do not affect existing agreements with other countries such as France.

Further information is available on [www.gov.je/UKHealthCosts](http://www.gov.je/UKHealthCosts) or by emailing [health@gov.je](mailto:health@gov.je) or calling Customer Services on 445500.

**-ends-**

#### **Notes to Editors:**

1. For further comment please contact Russell Pearson, Director of Finance and Information on 442278.
2. Jersey visitors to the UK will not have to pay for the following hospital services (because there is no charge under NHS Regulations):
  - treatment provided solely within an A&E department (or a walk-in centre in respect of services similar to those given in an A&E department). It is not correct to say that emergency treatment is free - charges will apply for emergency treatment (eg operations) provided elsewhere in a hospital;
  - family planning services;
  - compulsory psychiatric treatment;
  - treatment for certain contagious diseases, listed below, and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases (NB - HIV is not included except for initial diagnostic testing and associated counselling).

Exempt diseases:

There are certain diseases for which treatment is free in order to protect the wider public health. This exemption from charge will apply to the diagnosis even if the outcome is a negative result. It does not apply to any secondary illness that may be present even if treatment is necessary in order to successfully treat the exempted disease. For example, if a patient has TB and HIV only the treatment of TB is without charge, the treatment of HIV is chargeable.

Acute encephalitis	Plague
Acute poliomyelitis	Rabies
Amoebic dysentery	Relapsing fever
Anthrax	Rubella
Bacillary dysentery	Salmonella infection
Cholera	SARS
Diphtheria	Scarlet fever
Food poisoning	Smallpox

Leprosy Leptospirosis Malaria Measles Meningitis Meningococcal septicaemia (without meningitis) Mumps Ophthalmia neonatorum Paratyphoid fever	Staphylococcal infections Tetanus Tuberculosis Typhoid fever Typhus Viral haemorrhagic fevers Viral hepatitis Whooping cough Yellow fever
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### 3. Other Exempt Groups

As per current guidance, the following groups are exempt from charges

- Those who are travelling on business and work for an employer or company which has its principle place of business in the UK or is registered in the UK as a branch of an overseas company. A self employed person whose principle place of business is in the UK would also be exempt when travelling there on business.
- Students who are pursuing a full time course of study of at least six months' duration, or of less than 6 months' duration but which is substantially funded by the UK government.
- UK state pension holders are exempt from charges for treatment on a visit to the UK, providing they lived in the UK for ten continuous years or more at some point in the past.