

13 December 2005

Dear Consultee and Commentator

**Appraisal of gemcitabine for advanced/metastatic breast cancer -
change to process and timelines**

With the agreement of the Department of Health, NICE is introducing a new technology appraisal process, designed to produce high quality guidance for the NHS through a shorter, more efficient process. The Single Technology Appraisal (STA) process will be used largely for new interventions or new indications for existing interventions where a single technology is being compared to current standard care. Subject to consultation and appeal arrangements, the process will take around 6 months.

We have identified gemcitabine for advanced/metastatic breast cancer as a suitable candidate for the new STA process. We are now planning to initiate this appraisal in early 2006.

As we undertake the wave of single technology appraisals, we will consult on the detail of the process. Our experience with the first wave and the results of this consultation will inform future STA appraisals. This approach is consistent with the way the Institute has introduced and developed its procedures in the past. Information on this consultation can be found on the link provided, <http://www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=278619>

As a consequence of the transfer to the STA process we will no longer be issuing a final scope for this appraisal as per our previous process. We will be writing to you shortly to set out more details of the process and the proposed timelines, but we wanted you to be aware of our intentions. A copy of our press release is attached.

Yours sincerely,

Carole Longson
Director, Centre for Health Technology Evaluation