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NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE

JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (DHSS/NW THAMES RHA)
FOR THE CENTRAL BLOOD LABORATORIES

MINUTES OF THE 15TH MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 5 OCTOBER 1982 AT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY, HANNIBAL HOUSE, ELEPHANT AND CASTLE, LONDON SE1.

Present: Dr Harris (Chairman)
Mr Armour
Mr Collins
Dr Gunson
Dr Holburn
Mr Harris
Mr Kosin
Dr Lane
Professor Mollison
Mr Smart

Secretariat: Dr Walford
Mr Godfrey
Mr Green

In Attendance: Miss Scoular

APOLOGIES/INTRODUCTION

1. Apologies had been received from Mr Bathurst and Mr Harley. The Chairman welcomed Mr Kosin (NW Thames Finance Branch).

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - JMC CL(82)14

2. These were agreed.

MATTERS ARISING

a. Progress on Interim Redevelopment at BPL

3. Dr Lane reported that work on the final stage of the interim redevelopment (upgrading the loading bay and cold room) was due for completion by the end of the current financial year. A fault in one of the freeze driers, discovered after installation, would mean a 3 month delay in commissioning. However, the Laboratory had returned more or less to full production in September. Mr Collins estimated that the programme would be completed approximately 4 weeks behind schedule but that costs would be contained within the existing capital allocation.

b. Appointment of Chief Engineer at BPL

4. Mr Armour reported that 55 applicants had responded to the latest round of advertisements. Interviews were to begin on 2 November.

c. Sale of Surplus Paste

5. Mr Smart reported that his assessment of the international market suggested considerable potential demand for products surplus to NHS requirements. It was agreed that a decision on the disposal of surplus material, either in paste form or as finished products, should await the establishment of the Central Blood Laboratories Authority (CBLA).

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LONG TERM MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CENTRAL BLOOD LABORATORIES

6. Mr Godfrey explained that arrangements for the establishment of the CBLA were well advanced and that the Statutory Instruments had been submitted to Ministers. However, the essential detailed legal considerations had meant that the new Authority would come into being on 1 December 1982 and not on 1 November as originally intended. The draft Regulations allowed the Secretary of State to appoint as many members as he saw fit provided that at least two members had experience in industry and one was a member of an existing health authority. It was agreed that a final list of members should be circulated to the JMC.

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

7. The Committee received a report from the Directors on industrial action.

TRIAL OF INTRAVENOUS IMMUNOGLOBULIN

8. Dr Lane reported that MRC funding had been secured for the trial which was due to begin at Northwick Park Hospital in February. The Committee noted the progress with satisfaction.

CO-OPERATION BETWEEN BPL/WELLCOME IN THE PRODUCTION OF A JOINT RIA TEST

9. Mr Godfrey reported that a draft agreement had just been received from Wellcome and was under consideration. He assured the meeting that the interests of the NHS would be safeguarded before the agreement was finalised.

10. Dr Gunson suggested that BPL's control of the finished product should be emphasised in order to allay Regions' fears concerning the reliability of the test.

CBL TRAVEL SCHEMES

11. Mr Harris explained that the cost to BPL of free transport for the Laboratory's staff - £30,000 per annum - represented about 1% of the Laboratory's annual revenue costs and would be considered by Audit to be disproportionately high. Mr Armour emphasised that the Laboratory's remote situation and the lack of convenient public transport made it necessary to transport staff to and from 3 recognised points. Free transport had been an integral part of the terms and conditions of employment which were in general to be protected on the transfer of staff to the CBLA. After discussion it was agreed that the new Authority should be asked to examine existing arrangements in the light of Departmental guidance to the NHS on assisted travel schemes - [HC(77)32, HC(78)23].

POLICY STEERING GROUP FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF BPL

12. Mr Smart reported that at its last meeting the Group had received Treasury approval for the appointment of Matthew Hall Norcain Ltd as management contractors. After careful study of a range of options, the Group had recommended that BPL should be redeveloped large enough to make England and Wales self-sufficient in blood products and capable of extracting all therapeutic products from the plasma it would receive. Approval was now awaited from DHSS Ministers and Treasury.

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REPORT OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

13. Professor Mollison reported that the final meeting of the Scientific and Technical Committee had taken place at BGRL on 21 June 1982. Members had been most impressed by the new premises and by the scientific standards of the work being undertaken in the development of reagents. The Committee had shown particular interest in the results of the National External Quality Assessment Scheme for blood serology which had shown a wide variance in techniques, reagents used and internal quality control systems. The Committee had recommended that comprehensive written guidance on procedures should be prepared and had asked Regional Transfusion Directors, through Dr Gunson, to consider the production of a Manual of Recommended methods. Dr Gunson reported that initial discussions on the Manual were in hand.

BPL'S ANNUAL REPORT 1981-82 - JMC CL(82)16

14. The Committee noted BPL's report with satisfaction and congratulated Dr Lane and the staff of the laboratory on their achievements during a period of considerable upheaval. Mr Armour and Dr Lane were asked to convey the Committee's appreciation to BPL's staff at the first opportunity.

BGRL'S DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 1981-82 - JMC CL(82)17

15. Dr Holburn tabled the report and explained that particular emphasis had been placed on the future role of BGRL. The introduction of monoclonal antibodies could enable BGRL to broaden the range of reagents it manufactured. Dr Holburn emphasised the importance of centralising production of reagents. This would require the assent of those RTDs whose Transfusion Centres manufactured reagents. His report suggested that this be discussed at the Advisory Committee on the NBTS.

16. Members agreed to consider the content of the report and to pass comments and queries to Mr Godfrey by 19 October.

17. Mr Godfrey undertook to bring the comments made in the report on the Draft Circular on the Manufacture of Products in the NHS to the attention of the DHSS Division concerned.

18. It was agreed that copies of the CBLs' reports should be sent in confidence to members of the CBLA together with a review of the Laboratories' history, plans and problems to be prepared by the Directors.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

19. The Chairman explained that on the setting up of the CBLA the JMC and its sub-committees would be wound up. He thanked all members for their contributions and support over the past 3 years and, on behalf of the JMC, expressed special appreciation of the work and guidance of Mr Harley, and of the important roles played by Professor Mollison and Mr Smart as chairmen of the Scientific and Technical Committee and the Policy Steering Group respectively.

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