

INTRODUCTION

1. This submission seeks SofS's agreement to
 - a) not making a formal announcement of change of policy on use of AIDS funding for factor VIII at the Symposium
 - b) that the decision should be disseminated by means of a letter to Haemophilia Centre Directors from CMO followed by
 - c) a press release the day the letters are sent.

BACKGROUND

2. Previous submission dated 3 December outlined the reason for a shift in policy on the efficacy of high purity factor VIII for HIV seropositive haemophiliacs and the consequent need to signal approval for the use of AIDS funds to pay for the price differential between high and medium purity factor VIII for these individuals. CMO has sent a letter to Dr Christine Lee, Haemophilia Centre Director for Royal Free indicating his willingness to look again at the whole issue after her presentation of new data on World AIDS Day.

HANDLING

3. This is a sensitive issue given the speed with which policy change has been made, the high profile nature of the client group and the need presentationally to keep separate as far as possible the changing view of the science from the additional AIDS funds to be announced for 1993/94.

4. There is good news on AIDS funding for the NHS which PS(L) will be able to announce at the Expert Symposium on 16 December. This setting linked as it is with our good record on AIDS in Europe makes a very suitable venue for such an announcement. However if this is linked with the announcement on high purity factor VIII it is feared that the national press will lead on this story which would have the effect of swamping the other messages from the Symposium.

5. The increased AIDS funding was not based on any calculation of the differential costs of high purity factor VIII but on better forecasting of AIDS case numbers together with expert assessments of the preparation of HIV positive individuals with severe HIV disease. The NHS will also need to absorb any cost implications which our new guidance on partner notification, additional HIV test sites and testing, in ante natal settings as well as the implications the Tomlinson report may have for HIV/AIDS services in the capital. The extra burden (particularly in areas with large haemophilia centres) on HIV purchasers of the price differential between medium and high purity factor VIII for HIV seropositive haemophiliacs will be considerable but tolerable given the announcement of a 15% overall increase in funding.

CONCLUSION

6. SofS is therefore requested to agree to the change in policy on high purity factor VIII to be made by means of a CMO letter accompanied by a press release both to be issued on 18 December (draft letter attached at A) changed PO drafts for PM signature at (B).

HP(A)5 AIDS Unit