

Sue Cartwright APS/PS(L)

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Lords Unstarred Question on the Treatment and Services for HCV.

1. Lord Hunt has asked for a package of care to be worked up for all patients infected with HCV. We enclose a short minute for Lord Hunt to consider sending to SofS asking him to agree to a statement in the Lords on Wednesday that pulls together the elements of a co-ordinated approach to the problems associated with HCV. Lord Hunt would announce that funding to improve counselling and treatment facilities will be included in the general allocation for health authorities from April 2001 to complement the money already in the system intended to meet the overall cost of NICE guidance.
2. Much of the work to put this programme of care is already being considered or developed. It is important that the programme is flexible to meet the needs of the various groups of patients with HCV and that it builds on the examples of good practice that are available. But there are 3 areas, which are only in their very initial stages and need ministerial approval and possibly financial support to develop further.
3. In his note to SofS, Lord Hunt may wish to point out that his proposal has presentational and funding difficulties and would effectively be reopening decisions already taken about disposal of SR resources. However, with the spotlight on Government compensation for people with variant CJD, and the NBA contesting HCV litigation in the Courts, it would be politic to announce an increased priority to the services for all those with HCV. To introduce a care pathway only for Haemophiliacs who contracted HCV from blood products would suggest negligence and introduce a two tier healthcare system.
4. We attach a draft minute for PS(L) to consider sending to SofS and an outline of a care package for all people with HCV.

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