



10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

6 August 1999

THE PRIME MINISTER

Dear Alf,

Thank you for your letter of 1 July enclosing correspondence from Karin Pappenheim, Chief Executive of the Haemophilia Society, requesting a public inquiry into the infection of people with haemophilia with hepatitis C through NHS treatment.

Please accept my warmest congratulations on becoming the President of the Haemophilia Society. I know that the whole range of the Society's issues are close to your heart and that there is no-one who would be a more determined representative and advocate.

I have considered carefully the case for a public enquiry. I know that a great deal of distress has been caused to those affected, at a time when they had expected the greatest hope. But I believe that it is best to take steps which are positive and which look to the future. The Haemophilia Society is running several projects which will help those infected and it is working on more ideas. We are providing financial support and we are always pleased to assist with constructive developments. The Department of Health is making sure in discussion with Haemophilia Centre Directors that all those with haemophilia who might have been infected with hepatitis C are counselled and tested and they will issue guidance on treatment.

Hepatitis C affects people in different ways, people will have differing symptoms and some will be symptom free. I think there is much which can be done in working with people with haemophilia to enable them to cope with the difficulties which may arise if they are infected and to help them to maintain or improve the quality of their lives. I think we need to look to the future.

*Yours ever*

GRO-C

The Right Honourable The Lord Morris of Manchester