

20 AUG 85

19

Reck 22/8
Mr Morrison
Mr Thomson. for file please
YH
Mr. Mr Macpherson is preparing
a 25 minute, 16 line.

Mr Davies
Mr Macpherson
Dr McIntyre
Dr Covell

Copy to - Dr Forrester
Dr Gilray
Mr Hoy, SIO

GRO-C

V 20/8/85

PUBLICITY FOR AIDS TESTING

At a recent meeting with Dr Cash (on an unrelated subject) he raised the issue of media publicity for the introduction of AIDS testing. He is strongly of the view that it be given maximum media coverage - "Ministers on television" etc. This would be not only for the BTS test but also for the diversionary test; unless the message about the diversionary test is put across as strongly as the good news about the blood test then the result would simply be that the risk groups would turn up to donate blood so as to have the BTS test. Dr Cash told me that he had been urging this line on the CMO of DHSS at a recent meeting.

While I am sure we could gain considerable media publicity for the introduction of the BTS test without too much difficulty, I suspect that putting across (at the same time and with the same impact) the message on the diversionary test in a way which is both desirable and effective will be much more difficult to achieve. If it cannot be achieved then media publicity for the BTS test alone will simply result in increased risk to the blood supply.

We need to inform Ministers of the steps now being taken on the introduction of the 2 tests and Ministers will no doubt wish also to know what steps we are proposing to take on publicity. ^{- if any!} A very important element here is what DHSS are planning to do. Unfortunately my opposite number on the BTS side of DHSS is on leave but will be back within the next few days, when I shall try to find out what DHSS are proposing.

GRO-C

A J MURRAY
19 August 1985

SHHD
Division IVD/3
Room 6
Ext GRO-C
St Andrew's House