

CD-2.8

Dr Metters DCMO

From: J C Dobson

EHF1

Date: 2 August 1991

Copy: Mr Malone-Lee

Mr Heppell

Dr Walford

Miss Pease

Dr Halliday

Dr Rejman

Mr Kendall

CBLA/NBTS

Thank you for your minute of 17 July. I am sorry not to have replied sooner.

We spoke briefly, and I am happy to confirm that we do not see the NBA as the originator of quality and safety standards, but rather the means by which they can be uniformly secured throughout the NHS. It will operate within the framework of policies laid down by ministers on the advice of the ACVSB and of the MCA's licensing requirements.

It is of course possible that as a result of its work the NBA may wish to propose changes in standards, but the final decisions will remain with ministers and with the licensing authority.

GRO-C

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EH

POLICY : IN CONFIDENCE

Mr Dobson
Mr Canavan

From: Dr J S Metters DCMO
17 July 1991

Copies to: Mr Malone-Lee
Mr Heppell
Dr Walford
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CBLA/NBTS

1. Your minute of 12 July to Mrs Delfgou and the attached submission refer.
2. While I was aware of proposals for de-coupling CBLA's functions, one aspect that had escaped me was that the planned National Blood Authority would "lay down quality specifications for blood and plasma", as in paragraph 8 (i) of the submission.
3. Are we really suggesting that NBA would decide its own "quality standards"? While the Authority could certainly be responsible for ensuring that appropriate standards of quality were applied to all blood and plasma utilised by NBTS or passed to BPL for processing, I am not convinced it should be the arbiter of quality and safety criteria.
4. Taking virological safety as an example, the main reason for establishing the Advisory Committee on the Virological Safety of Blood (ACVSB) was for Ministers to have access to independent expert advice on the virological screening of donated blood. The Committee advises Ministers on which virological screening procedures should be routinely applied to, throughout the NBTS. Ministers retain responsibility for deciding which screening tests are implemented.
5. If Ministers agree to the proposals for NBA, they will surely still wish to retain ACVSB to advise on virological quality specifications rather than pass this responsibility to NBA.
6. I have used virological safety as an example, similar considerations apply to other non-virological transfusion transmitted disorders.

GRO-C

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