



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY

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From the Joint Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

PO(MIN-H)1189/3

Dr Edmund Marshall MP

31 August 1976

Dear Edmund,

Thank you for your note of 2 August enclosing a letter (attached) from Mr D Cooper of **GRO-C** about the supply of Factor VIII for use in the treatment of haemophilia.

Freeze-dried Factor VIII concentrate is obtained from one of two sources. One is the commercial source, and four pharmaceutical companies have now contracted to supply concentrate to the National Health Service. Individual clinicians are free, subject to any local constraints imposed by health authorities, to purchase these products for their patients, but, as Mr Cooper points out, this is an expensive way of satisfying the demand. The other source of Factor VIII is the National Blood Transfusion Service (NBTS). Freeze-dried Factor VIII concentrate is manufactured at the NBTS central laboratories using plasma from blood collected by the Regional Blood Transfusion Centres from voluntary donors. Last year we authorised a special allocation of £500,000 to boost the production of NBTS concentrate and the production programme is well up to schedule. In addition Regional Blood Transfusion Centres produce significant quantities of Factor VIII in the form of cryoprecipitate, a product still extensively used by some clinicians. I appreciate that if you are not already familiar with the subject the terminology may be somewhat confusing, but I can assure you that it is very far from the case to say that the NHS is producing only a minute proportion of the total amount of Factor VIII.

We realise, however, that there is no room for complacency. The Department has recently been advised by a group of experts working in this field that the anticipated total demand for Factor VIII over the next five years will be greater than that previously forecast, and we are considering the implications of this advice. The increase appears to be closely related to the growth in the possibilities for home treatment of haemophilia, which is itself largely dependent on the availability of freeze-dried concentrate.

I hope that this letter will reassure Mr Cooper that the Government does take the plight of haemophilia sufferers very seriously.

Yours sincerely

GRO-C

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ERIC DEAKINS