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MC/rme

9th April 1991

Dr H.H. Gunson
National Director
National Directorate
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Dear Harold

VIGAM ANNOUNCEMENT BY BPL: Mr Crowley's letter

The relevant quote from Jane Martin's letter is not the one mentioned in Mr Crowley's letter but the following:

"Without this plasma revenue, the Transfusion Centres might have to dramatically increase their charges to hospitals for their services."

The point raised in my letter is that, in the climate of the new NHS Act, where no cross-subsidisation should be allowed, we are faced with a significant subsidy of plasma for fractionation by purchasing units. There is no efficiency or cost allocation problem at NLBTC. I challenge BPL to show that any regional transfusion centre can collect apheresis plasma at the prices paid by BPL. The Bio Products Laboratory appears to have total disregard to the fact that plasma obtained from paid donors is considerably cheaper than plasma obtained from voluntary, altruistic donors who are treated very differently. In addition, plasma obtained by commercial companies can be collected in all shapes of containers. Fractionators test the plasma from individual units themselves and they do not charge collection facilities for the testing. In addition the specifications for plasma for fractionation are less stringent, donor follow-up is not required by commercial companies and the suppliers do not need to incur additional expenses investigating and retesting samples when a large pool is found to be contaminated.

WTD/ 2897

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The principle of national self-sufficiency for blood and blood components is praise - worthy. However, it is an expensive principle and if Ministers are to support it, considerable cash injection into the NBTS or BPL will be needed.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

GRO-C

/Marcela Contreras
Director

Dr Sheila Adam
Mr B J Crowley
Mr M Malone-Lee

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