

Witness Name: William Wright

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INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

EXHIBIT WITN2287042



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

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Dear Bill

I am aware you have concerns about issues surrounding Hepatitis C infection through NHS treatment with infected blood or blood products in the 1970s and 1980s. I wanted to write and set out the Scottish Executive's position on these matters.

I have on a number of occasions, expressed my deepest sympathy for all those affected. I recognise how difficult it must be to come to terms with a serious and distressing medical condition such as Hepatitis C, and that this is compounded by the knowledge that infection occurred through medical treatment.

Following the Health Committee meeting on 18 April 2006, I undertook to carefully consider the rationale, deliberations and recommendations of the Committee before responding substantively to their call for a public inquiry. I subsequently wrote to the Convener of the Committee on 16 June to inform them of my decision not to hold an inquiry and the reasons for that decision. I enclose a copy of my detailed letter for your information. This covers, amongst other things: the look back exercise conducted between 1995 and 1997; communication with patients; and testing and current procedures for investigating new cases of infection where a link with blood transfusion is suspected.

I have had to reach a balanced view on the justification, or otherwise, for a public inquiry into these events. This has been a difficult decision for me, but I have concluded that an inquiry would be unlikely to uncover any new evidence or lead to significant lessons for the future. It would also depend on the recollections of witnesses about events which took place twenty or more years ago. An inquiry would also place a major pressure on our blood transfusion service and would not add significantly to our understanding of how the blood supply became infected with Hepatitis C; rather it would be a diversion of effort from delivering and improving health services today.

Andy Kerr

GRO-C

ANDY KERR