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*With the Compliments of
Department of Health and Social Security*

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NOTE OF A MEETING BETWEEN MS(H) AND REPRESENTATIVES OF
THE HAEMOPHILIA SOCIETY ON WEDNESDAY 21 OCTOBER 1981

Present: MS(H)

Mr Godfrey HS1A

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HAEMOPHILIA SOCIETY

The Revd Alan Tanner	- Chairman
K R Polton MBE	- Honorary Secretary
J L Prothero	- Chairman, European Advisory Board
K Milne	- Chairman, Blood Products Sub-Committee
D G Watters	- Co-ordinator

SUPPLY OF FACTOR VIII

1. The Haemophilia Society's representatives were concerned that the NHS was so reliant upon expensive imported blood products and feared that cuts in NHS expenditure might result in health authorities refusing to supply Factor VIII to haemophiliacs. MS(H) assured the Society of the Government's support for the principle of self-sufficiency in blood products though he stressed that this had to be a long-term aim as the present Blood Products Laboratory at Elstree was not able to manufacture sufficient Factor VIII to obviate the need to import blood products. MS(H) reported that the Laboratory's current upgrading programme would double Factor VIII production to 30 million international units by the end of 1982. Planning of the new Laboratory had begun. It was too early at this stage to say what its capacity would be or when it would be fully commissioned.

2. The Haemophilia Society accepted that self-sufficiency should only be aimed for if it could be shown to be economic to do so.

PRESCRIPTION CHARGE EXEMPTION

3. The Society pointed to the different practices throughout the NHS. They reported that in some areas haemophiliacs on home therapy did not pay hospital prescription charges; in other areas they did. Those haemophiliacs who occasionally received prescriptions from General Practitioners had to pay the prescription charge. The Society felt that haemophiliacs should be exempt from prescription charges because their condition by definition required replacement therapy (by Factor VIII) for life. MS(H) expressed sympathy with the Society's case. He explained the problems in extending the current list of exemptions. MS(H) reported that he would be considering the many competing claims from different groups and hoped to be able to extend exemption in time though he could not give any firm commitment to the Society. MS(H) asked officials to prepare a note on the strength of the Society's case and on the possible cost of extending exemption to haemophiliacs.

4. Following the meeting the Society asked if MS(H) would write confirming plans to increase the supply of Factor VIII produced by the Blood Products Laboratory. The letter would be published in the Society's Newsletter.

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October 1981

Action: Paragraph 3 - Mr Law PJ
Paragraph 4 - Mr Godfrey HS1A

cc
Dr Walford ✓
Mr Law