



# NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE

## MERSEY & NORTH WALES

Director: Vanessa J. Martlew, M.B., Ch.B., M.R.C.P., MRCPPath.

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Our Ref: **VBM/CJW**

Your Ref:

When telephoning or  
calling please ask for:-

24th January 1991

Dr H H Gunson  
The National Director  
The National Directorate  
Gateway House  
Piccadilly South  
Manchester M60

Dear Dr Gunson

### Anti HCV testing of blood donations

Thank you for your rapid communication concerning antibody testing for hepatitis C virus. We are very pleased that the Department of Health have finally agreed that the routine testing of all donations is indicated.

As you will know B.P.L. has decided to discontinue its supply of hepatitis B surface antigen testing by the R.T.A. method with effect from the 31st March, 1991. As a result of this we are changing over to an Elisa method on the 1st April. We are therefore reluctant to introduce two new technologies together and have been advised by representatives of Ortho that it will be difficult to deliver before mid summer. We would therefore prefer to delay the implementation of testing to the 1st August 1991 for all donations, on the understanding that of course this will have to be preceded by a five week period of testing to assure that all products in the bank at that time have been tested for these antibodies and found to be negative.

Clearly our budget will not support such a scheme which will involve an additional revenue outlay of approximately £450,000 per annum. I should be grateful if you could confirm that this money will be allocated by the Department of Health and that the new screening policy will not be associated with a need for surrogate testing by alanine transaminase assay on all donors.

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We are eagerly looking forward to the protocol for testing with appropriate guidance on the clinical follow up of donors found to be positive.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

GRO-C

Dr V J Martlew  
Director

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