

CD-7AUG

Mrs Baldock PS/PS(L)

From: J Canavan

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Date: 7 August 1990

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HEPATITIS C SCREENING : ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE VIROLOGICAL SAFETY OF BLOOD

1. PS(L) will wish to know that at its July meeting the ACVSB advised in principle that all blood donations should be screened for hepatitis C virus. A full submission setting out the case for screening, the financial implications and results of a cost benefit study will be provided shortly.

2. As a first step the ACVSB has recommended a pilot study to evaluate the two available screening tests and the supplementary tests which would be used to discriminate between infectious and non-infectious positive reactions to the initial screening test. This would give the NBTS experience of using the tests together and will indicate if there are particular advantages in using one or other of the initial screening tests. Preparations for the evaluation are underway and the results are expected to be available in October for consideration by the ACVSB.

3. The screening of blood donations would cost on estimated £5-£6 million a year. The question of how this would be funded will have to be considered in the full submission.

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