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MC/JC

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Dr H H Gunson
National Director
The National Directorate
National Blood Transfusion Service
Gateway House
Piccadilly South
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Dear Harold

National self-sufficiency in blood and blood derivatives

I am writing on behalf of the Eastern Division of Consultants in Blood Transfusion, following our meeting on Thursday 24 May 1990.

Members of the Division expressed their dissatisfaction about the lack of interest of the Department of Health in self-sufficiency. It was stated that it is not enough to say that "ministers are committed to self-sufficiency" if this is not backed by actions and financial support. We firmly believe that the time has come to reassess the situation regarding self-sufficiency. Members of the Division feel strongly that there is no reason why the plasma donated voluntarily by British donors should not go back to British patients. There are very good ethical and financial reasons for the encouragement of self-sufficiency. Why should we be paying twice for albumin and clotting factor concentrates? We are paying the commercial companies for imported products and at the same time are spending vast sums of money in apheresis and routine blood collection, as well as in the sophisticated running of BPL. Isn't it about time the Department made up its mind that the only way to succeed in self-sufficiency is by subsidising BPL?

If we continue with current practices, we will be cutting our own throats. We already have the precedent of BPL competing with a Regional Transfusion Centre for the supply of products to a particular hospital, with BPL undercutting the "NBTS

discounted price". We feel that it might not be too late to turn the clock backwards. As core providers within the NHS, we feel that the NBTS should be excluded from charging.

I have been asked to tell you that consultants in the Division are willing to go public on the issue of self-sufficiency and are even prepared to stage a parliamentary lobby campaign. I would be grateful if you could reply to us within the next two weeks.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

GRO-C

MARCELA CONTRERAS
Director

