



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY
ALEXANDER FLEMING HOUSE
ELEPHANT AND CASTLE LONDON SE1 6BY

TELEPHONE 01-407 5522 EXT

GTN GRO-C

Dr Contreras

Your reference:

Our reference:

To: All District Medical Officers

Copies to: Regional Medical Officers
Regional Transfusion Directors
Family Practitioners Committees
for information

23 September 1985

Dear Doctor

ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS)

HTLV III ANTIBODY TESTING OUTSIDE THE NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE (NBTS)

I am writing to you about the local arrangements which will need to operate within your District to ensure that HTLV III testing facilities are available to all doctors.

I will shortly be writing to all doctors with information on the test which will become available for widespread use from a date in mid-October yet to be announced. In July of this year Regional Health Authorities were asked to take steps to ensure that testing facilities would be provided outside the NBTS to coincide with the introduction of routine testing of all blood donations in the NBTS. Genito Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinics with their experience of dealing with sexually transmitted diseases on a confidential basis will be best placed to offer advice and a test where necessary to the majority of people in high risk groups who are concerned about HTLV III infection. However, in view of the widespread publicity given to AIDS through the media there is every likelihood that numbers of persons outside the recognised high-risk groups for whom attendance at a GUM clinic would be inappropriate will be concerned about their antibody status. It is therefore important that local arrangements to meet this likely demand be established.

There is already evidence of widespread public interest in the introduction of the test and how it will be provided. It is important that doctors, particularly general practitioners, are fully aware of the local facilities which have been established when they are approached by patients about the need for a test. May I therefore ask you to consider how your local arrangements can be made known to doctors and how existing lines of communication with general practitioners through the Family Practitioner Committees may be utilised to help in this.

Yours sincerely

GRO-C

E D ACHESON
DM FRCP FFCM MFOM

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