



PERSONAL : IN CONFIDENCE

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Dear Angela

HEPATITIS C

As you will recall, during the last meeting of the Advisory Committee on Microbiological Safety for Blood and Tissue for Transplantation, on 15 December, the Committee discussed possible benefits of a look-back programme for hepatitis C and agreed their advice to Ministers as:

- "i. In MSBT's view there is a duty of care towards those infected with HCV as a result of NHS treatment. It follows that procedures should be put in place to identify those patients at risk;
- ii. Whatever is done should be done equally and uniformly throughout the UK;
- iii. Guidance should be drawn up as soon as possible:
 - a) on procedures for identifying those at risk, and
 - b) While it was for the medical practitioner responsible for each patient identified as at risk to decide what should be made known to the patient about his/her risk status, and to decide whether and what treatment should be advised, guidance on the counselling and treatment options would be desirable."

The Committee agreed that these conclusions would be passed on to the Secretaries of State of all four Health Departments. If Ministers wish, an ad hoc Working Party could be established drawn from the membership of the MSBT, and the Advisory Group on Hepatitis.

Ministers here have now agreed to go ahead with the look-back programme and asked me as chairman of the MSBT to convene without delay the proposed ad hoc Working Party.

I should be very glad if you would agree to serve as one of the MSBT group of experts, and if so if you would let me know as soon as possible so that we might arrange the first meeting within a week or so. The MSBT Secretariat will be in touch shortly regarding dates. At the first meeting we can formally agree our terms of reference and programme of work, and if the membership needs to be expanded to cover particular specialties.

I have also sent invitations to Dr R Mitchell, Professor A Zuckerman, Professor J D Williams, Dr D W Gorst and Dr R E Warren. Professor Howard Thomas of St Mary's Hospital, London W2, has been invited as MSBT specifically recommended that a Hepatologist should join the ad hoc Working Party.

yours sincerely

GRO-C

J S METTERS
Deputy Chief Medical Officer

101/YdeS