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PEH/mm/HCV1

10 June 1996

**To: Consultant Haematologists in charge of Blood Transfusion  
Laboratories supplied by the National Blood Service - North  
London Centre (NHS and Private)**

Dear Colleagues

### **Hepatitis C look-back**

Here is another update of progress in the look-back exercise!

You will recall that, when this exercise was introduced over a year ago, the Department of Health anticipated completion "by the end of the summer". Although we are making progress, I do not foresee completion by the end of summer 1996! Nevertheless, it is clear that everyone is making a great effort to complete this (first) part of the exercise and a further progress report to you all would probably be helpful.

The exercise to date has been restricted to donors with confirmed anti-HCV positive test results. The number of blood components included in the look-back exercise from these donors has now reached 1081. As of today 785 forms (73%) have been returned to us. The number of patients known to be deceased is 345, which represents 44% of recipients. This is a remarkably stable statistic. A further 169 blood components cannot be traced to a named recipient. We are thus left with 272 potentially contactable recipients. With the exception of two of the larger teaching hospitals, who elected to notify and counsel their own patients, the majority of recipients have been contacted and notified by us and a smaller number by their general practitioners. We continue to find approximately 30% of recipients uninfected, 50-60% persistently infected, and the remainder with evidence of past infection. Referral to specialist liver units has been made in the vast majority of cases.

On the attached sheet, you will see a summary of the progress at hospitals. You will note that a small number of hospitals have returned all but one LBF1 form. It may be that searching is still being carried out, or that the form has been misplaced. I will be notifying these hospitals individually, in case a form has been overlooked.

I hope that I can encourage those of you who still have a small amount of work left at this stage to make every effort to complete the exercise. We shall be very shortly sending out further LBF1 forms, relating to the second phase of the look-back exercise. This will be pursuing the donations from donors whose hepatitis C test results are suggestive of past infection. Recipients of these donations will be traced, on the assumption that the donors could have been infectious at some point in the past. The number of such donors is small and the additional work for any individual hospital will be correspondingly less than the main part of the exercise. I do hope it will not prove to be too great a burden.

Finally, may I thank you and your staff for your continuing cooperation and efforts to complete this very large exercise.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely

GRO-C

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# NATIONAL BLOOD SERVICE

## NORTH LONDON



### Hepatitis C look-back exercise:

### Progress report 7th June 1996

Number of hospitals/clinics contacted	=	49
Number of hospitals completed the exercise	=	23
Number of hospitals with a "nil return"	=	3
Number of hospitals with 1 form outstanding	=	5