

NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE

National Director:

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HHG/LB

3rd April 1991

SAME LETTER TO: All RTDs - England and Wales

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G.D. TDS
P.V. D.M.C. J.F.
M.M. (Bulfinch)

14/91
GRO-C

Dear John,

ANTI-HCV TESTS ON BLOOD DONATIONS

You will recall that in my letter to you of 15th February I suggested that 1st July 1991 might be an appropriate date to commence anti-HCV screening of blood donations.

You may be aware that since the three-centre trial of anti-HCV tests was completed, Ortho and Abbott have produced second generation test kits which have additional antigens to the C-100 of the test we have evaluated. There may also be other companies supplying anti-HCV tests.

The Department of Health has agreed that there should be a "second-round" comparative evaluation of anti-HCV test kits at the Newcastle, North London and Glasgow RTCs, together with appropriate confirmatory testing. It has not yet been possible to commence the evaluation using production batches of the second generation tests referred to above and one of these will not be available until later this month.

It is undoubtedly in our interest that this evaluation takes place. However, to complete this study and become operational by 1st July 1991 is too tight a schedule. It is difficult to state precisely a revised date, but I think we should aim to commence routine screening for anti-HCV by 1st September 1991.

I thought that you should have this information as soon as possible.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely,

GRO-C

H.H. GUNSON,
National Director

c.c. Dr. J.S. Metters)	
Dr. H. Pickles)	
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Mr. J. Canavan)	
Mr. M. Fuller)	
Professor J.D. Cash ✓	-	SNBTS
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Dr. E.A. Follett	-	Ruchill Hospital, Glasgow
Dr. J. Craske	-	PHLS, Manchester