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RECALL OF BLOOD PRODUCTS

Blood Products Ltd., part of the National Blood Authority, will tomorrow announce a recall of blood products originating from a batch of plasma which contained a donation from a victim of nvCJD.

They will fax a warning letter - probably at about 1000 hrs or 1030 hrs - to 24 of their customers (mostly hospitals), who are known to have received blood products from the affected batch. They will have a Press statement ready to issue to The Press Association in the early afternoon, and to give to those following up the PA story. Dr Angela Robinson, Medical Director of the NBA, will consider media bids.

BACKGROUND

This is the first time such a recall has been necessary. It is being made under a recent recommendation of the CPMP (the European Committee for Proprietary Medicinal Products). The CPMP recommended on 23rd October this year that any blood product containing plasma originating from a confirmed case of nvCJD must be recalled. The NBA is therefore acting speedily, and in accordance with this new recommendation.

The NBA were alerted earlier this week by the father of an nvCJD victim, who pointed out that his offspring had donated blood in 1995. That donation has been traced to a plasma pool (a "pool" contains about 20,000 donations - roughly-speaking, 20,000 pints), and the products of that pool have been traced to 24 BPL customers.

It is highly likely that the vast majority of the products will by now have been used, but there could be some which are just within their shelf life. This is therefore a precautionary measure, based on post-donation information.

Any patients who have received blood products originating from this specific pool will not be told. There is, after all, no evidence that CJD or nvCJD can be transmitted by any route other than intracerebral inoculation (i.e., an injection directly into the brain).

The tracing and destruction of any remaining material from this plasma pool does not affect the general supply of blood and blood products. It is unlikely that many stocks will be left anyway. Text of BPL letter, NBA Press statement, and Q & A briefing to follow.

CONTACTS:

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