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/ Mr Murray

Copy to: Dr McIntyre

SCREENING BLOOD DONATIONS FOR AIDS

Thank you for the copy of the DHSS submission relating to the introduction of HTLV III screening. It is helpful and convenient to see it at this stage and I agree that this should be a subject of discussion with Dr Smithies and Mr Williams on 4 February.

The information is in line with the developments we have been hearing about and I think that all the considerations will be familiar to the SNBTS. The RTC at Law is testing the Abbott (USA) screening test which, as indicated in the annex to the submission, uses the less convenient ELISA technique and requires certain dedicated equipment supplied as part of the package from the manufacturers (at appropriate cost of course). I would hope that the SNBTS would wish to use the new UK test and that this test would be made equally available north of the Border.

The estimated cost of screening looks to be rather more than we have provisionally budgeted so far, but of course it is unlikely that the test will be in operation for much more than 6 months of the current year. However you will no doubt be watching the DHSS Ministerial response with particular interest in any specific financial allocation, and having in mind the briefing of our own Minister as appropriate. The DHSS submission does not make an actual request for funding although the financial implications are identified.

Room 25
SAHA E BELL
21 January 1985

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To see above and attached DHSS submission. The costs, and timescale in para 6 of the submission are very speculative. I hope a clearer picture will emerge at the meeting (here) which I will be attending on 4 February. Our £50,000 in 1985/86 for AIDS testing does however give as it will considerably underhand the mark. The way the English ATS is funded (via Health authorities) will make it difficult for direct comparison if DHSS Ministers announce a special allocation. It would seem premature to start suggesting increasing the 1985/86 allocation (unless you think a marker to finance at this stage would be of help to them). The picture at this stage is clearer on the 4th. api 22/1