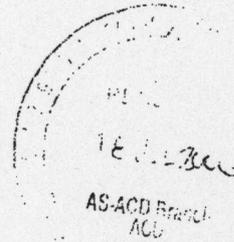

Blood User Group, Victoria

13th July 2006

The Secretary
Review of Australia's Plasma Fractionation Arrangements
Department of Health and Ageing
GPO Box 9848
MDP 47
Canberra ACT 2601
Australia



Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Plasma fractionation review

The Victorian Blood Users Group consists of major users of blood and blood products, with representatives from each of the major teaching hospitals in Victoria, from private pathology companies and the major medical colleges.

There have been concerns about plasma sourced from overseas donors from both the Users Group and consumers representing both donors and recipients of plasma derived product, particularly intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG).

- Some imported IVIG from overseas is from paid donors. The underlying principle of blood donation in Australia has been that of voluntary donation. Altruism and lack of financial incentive have been shown to improve the safety of donation.
- Patient care may be compromised. Some imported IVIGs have limited publications related to dose and benefit for some patient groups. Local IVIG is more likely to include antibodies to local infectious agents and be more effective in preventing infections.
- Some imported IVIG is sourced from donors in countries at higher potential risk of vCJD than Australia. The real or perceived risk of transmission has not, to our knowledge, been assessed and publicly documented by the TGA and the Special Expert Committee on Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (SECTSE). Potential Australian donors who are excluded from donation as they have lived in the countries where the vCJD has been diagnosed see this as an anomaly.
- Australia had been self-sufficient in producing plasma for 75 Years. The NBA Annual Report 03-04 clearly states national self-sufficiency as an aim (page 16). A policy change from self-sufficiency is worthy of public debate. A public debate about national self-sufficiency could result in greater commitment to voluntary blood donation in Australia. It is the opinion of this committee that the policy of national self-sufficiency should be upheld with resources directed to collection of increased amounts of Australian plasma to meet Australian plasma-derived product needs.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Carole Smith'.

Dr Carole Smith, MD, FRACP, FRCPA

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