



Assistant Secretary for Health
Surgeon General
Washington, D.C. 20201

NOV 3 1998

Dear Blood Bank/Transfusion Service Director:

As you know, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has recommended that individuals transfused with blood infected with the Hepatitis C (HCV) virus be notified of their potential risk. I am asking all blood banks and transfusion directors to actively participate in this important public health effort. The enclosed document, which calls attention to your special roles and responsibilities regarding tracing and notifying certain blood recipients of their possible exposure to HCV from transfusions, represents the current thinking of the DHHS in this effort.

Infection with HCV often results in a chronic but silent liver disease associated with cirrhosis, liver failure, and cancer. It is the major reason for liver transplantation in the U.S. today. The effort to notify persons at increased risk for HCV infection is being undertaken because of recent improvements in the diagnosis and treatment of patients with HCV-related liver disease. Although the last date notification can begin is March 1999, I urge you to begin this notification as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Satcher".

David Satcher, M.D., Ph.D.
Assistant Secretary for Health and
Surgeon General

Enclosure