

IRISH HAEMOPHILIA SOCIETY

Wednesday 12th November 2003

Re: Possible criminal investigation into infection of people with haemophilia through contaminated blood products.

The Irish Haemophilia Society (IHS) has expressed concern that possible criminal proceedings arising from the Lindsay Tribunal report could have stalled and is calling for urgent clarification from the Minister for Health and Children, Michael Martin. The concern is prompted by recent correspondence from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).

On 22nd Sept, the IHS wrote to the DPP's office to ascertain on behalf of it's members if there was any advancement in relation to criminal proceedings. In a letter dated 14th October, the DPP's office responded stating:

- It received a copy of the Lindsay Tribunal report on 31st October 2002, from the Minister for Health and Children on foot of a Government decision
- The DPP's office wrote to the Office of the Attorney General (AG) on 21st November 2002 seeking further information in relation to the "area and focus" of a possible criminal investigation
- The AG's office responded stating the Department of Health and Children could provide assistance
- On 13th December 2002, the DPP wrote to the Minister seeking help "concerning the identification of any possible criminal offences which may have been committed by persons arising from the [Lindsay] Tribunal's Report".
- The DPP received an acknowledgement "shortly thereafter"

What concerns the IHS is that the DPP's office still has not heard from the Department of Health and Children nearly one year later. In its letter, the DPP's office states: "If the Director receives such information in the future that may enable a Garda investigation, the matter will of course be considered".

The IHS would like to ascertain what action the Department of Health and Children has taken since December of last year and when it will revert to the DPP with the information which is clearly required. There is an onus on the Minister to do this considering 81 members of the IHS have died to date as a result of blood products contaminated with HIV and hepatitis C, and many more are continuing to battle serious illness.

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