

WATCHTOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

HOSPITAL INFORMATION SERVICES
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May 1, 1992

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Dear Brothers:

We would like to set out some helpful information to supplement the May 1, 1992, letter "To All Congregations" that deals with blood transfusion matters.

Information needed before calling the HLC. We have reports of publishers being told by their elders to call the HLC before the elders have determined that the case truly required the help of the committee. Listen long enough and ask enough questions to try to determine whether the HLC should be involved or not. For example, it is important to determine exactly what the medical problem is, such as leukemia, surgery for an aneurysm, open-heart surgery, etc. Ask if they know what the blood count of the patient is, since that information is often vital. If you are going to follow through and call the HLC for the family, be sure to obtain the name and phone number of the publisher so that you can give them to the HLC.

Hospital Liaison Committees look after blood transfusion matters ONLY. Sometimes the Witness is looking for psychiatric care or has a question about some drug product. But please note: "The Hospital Liaison Committee should be called only when the patient needs a cooperative doctor [to manage a case without using blood], when a confrontation develops, or when a threat to force blood on the patient is unresolved."--See "Pay Attention to Yourselves and to All the Flock," page 22, top of the page.

The HLC arrangement is only for baptized and unbaptized **PUBLISHERS** and their children. It is also good to determine whether the patient you are dealing with is a publisher in good standing. Also, some HLCs are being called by elders for handling cases of non-Witness relatives, disfellowshipped relatives, wayward ones, friends, workmates, and interested people on whom only a few return visits may have been made. This is not appropriate. These people often give in under pressure and take blood, leaving the hospital staff with the impression that Witnesses will compromise if pressured. This produces problems for actual Witnesses who later come to that hospital or doctor for treatment. Medical personnel at times find it difficult to distinguish between those who truly are Jehovah's Witnesses and those who are not.

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Hospital Liaison Committees are not a "visitation" group. All Christians have the responsibility to visit, encourage, and care for the sick. (Matt. 25:36) This is especially the duty of all elders in all congregations. (Please review "Pay Attention to Yourselves and to All the Flock," pages 21-22.) We do not have HLCs in all cities where there are congregations, so it should not be concluded that HLCs are the responsible ones to look after all the infirm ones in our midst. Even where there are HLCs, their assignment is to look after blood transfusion situations only. Shepherding the flock is the responsibility of the elders of the congregation where the patient is associated.

HLC member list is for elders only. As we said before, the list of the HLC members is not to be posted on the information board. Thus, we were surprised to learn that despite the previous notice not to post the list of HLC members anywhere, some in a part on a congregation meeting have actually read the names of the HLC members to the brothers. Please do not thus interfere with the need for confidentiality in this matter. Important: Please make a copy of the HLC list for each elder to have with him at all times. This may be accomplished by each elder having several copies, for example, one at home, one at work, and so on.

May Jehovah bless your prayerful endeavors to assist your brothers in a time of need as you cheerfully "pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock" in your care.--Acts 20:28.

Your brothers,

Watchtower B. S. Society

OF NEW YORK, INC.

Hospital Information Services

[This letter and the one "To All Congregations" of May 1, 1992, replace the letter of April 1, 1989, so please remove that older letter from your files, and destroy it so as to avoid confusion.]