



WATCH TOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF BRITAIN

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HIA:HSA May 2, 2009

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Cooperating with Hospital Liaison Committees

Dear Brothers:

Please find enclosed your latest Hospital Liaison Committee (HLC) list. Each elder should have these details to hand at all times; those who keep these numbers on their mobile telephone should update them accordingly. *An elder should always make the introductory call to the HLC.*

Contact the HLC as soon as you become aware that a publisher is referred for hospital treatment that could involve the blood issue. If in doubt, please contact the HLC. Be particularly alert to those diagnosed with cancer or blood cancers. While some may hesitate to discuss health or medical matters, please emphasize that early contact with the HLC can help prevent emergencies. While the HLC can only assist publishers, you may consult them regarding others who wish to take a firm stand on the blood issue.

When facing hospitalization, publishers need to remind their doctor (GP) of their request for non-blood surgical and/or medical management. It is important for the doctor to include this in the referral letter to a specialist/surgeon.

Information you need before you call the HLC is indicated on the back of the list. Therefore, when you make copies of the list for distribution among the elders, please copy these points onto the reverse side.

The Patient Support Group (PSG). It is thoughtful to inform the PSG when one of your publishers is admitted into a local hospital, but naturally, the responsibility to visit such ones would rest with the local congregation.

If a publisher is hospitalized away from home, support by the PSG can be arranged through your local HLC. If assistance with accommodation is required for a publisher to stay near a relative in hospital, please provide information about the spiritual background, the likely length of stay, and the financial arrangements for food, transport, and accommodation. Please assist if any problems arise in connection with these arrangements.

Pregnant sisters should ask you to request the *Care Plan for Women in Labour Refusing a Blood Transfusion* from the HLC as soon as their pregnancy is confirmed. Ensure that the sister understands that one copy should be added to her clinical notes, and remind her to request a meeting with a representative from the anaesthetic department during her antenatal care. Please do not keep copies of the *Care Plan* on file.

To all foreign-language congregations and congregations caring for a foreign-language group: For an announcement concerning the *Care Plan*, please note page 7 of the December 2005 issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry* (Britain edition).

The elderly need to keep copies of their previous *Advance Decision to Refuse Specified Medical Treatment* documents to prove their long-held views. If no such document can be found, it can create difficulties for doctors or carers, who may be anxious about their legal position if an elderly person is not sufficiently competent to refuse recommended medical treatment. Please could each group overseer check whether family members hold copies for elderly parents, especially those in care homes. Group overseers should remind family members to keep copies of these, or, if there is no immediate family in the truth, should accept this responsibility and also lodge copies with the congregation secretary.

Children. Very few clinicians will commit themselves to treat children without recourse to blood. However, the HLC can help parents find the best solution available. (Refer parents to the September 1992 *Our Kingdom Ministry* insert, “Safeguarding Your Children From Misuse of Blood,” and to the December 2005 *Our Kingdom Ministry* article “Could Your Child Make a Mature Decision?”)

Advance Decision document. We cannot overemphasize the importance of the brothers filling in this document. Many have evidently not done so, and of those who have, few have lodged copies with their congregation secretary. Often, an *Advance Decision* document cannot be located in an emergency, which has led to serious difficulties in recent years. Hence we suggest that copies be lodged with the secretary, then, if this document cannot be located, the HLC may be able to access the secretary’s copy. If the secretary is away for any lengthy period, these should be accessible to another elder.

This letter should be kept in the “Hospital Liaison Committee/Advance Decision” category section of the congregation’s file. It replaces the letter of May 1, 2008, addressed to all bodies of elders. That letter should be removed from the file and destroyed. Furthermore, for information as to how publishers can prepare for medical treatment, at which point they should ask an elder to contact the HLC on their behalf, and what they can do once hospitalized, please refer to our letter of May 1, 2008, to all congregations. This should be kept in the same section of your file.

Please be assured of our sincere appreciation for the fine work accomplished by congregation elders in assisting individuals who face faith-challenging medical situations. (1 Peter 5:2) We send our warm Christian love.

Your brothers in Jehovah’s service,

Watch Tower B. & J. Society
OF BRITAIN

HOSPITAL INFORMATION SERVICES

Enclosure