

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
P.O. BOX 5013,
WELLINGTON.

9 December 1970.

CLINICAL SERVICES LETTER NO. 103

TO MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

Dear Doctor,

PERSONAL CUSTOMS CLEARANCE: POSSESSION OF DRUGS

At the point of entry to most countries Customs Officers are paying special attention to drugs in the personal effects of travellers, as one means of reducing illicit traffic. They have the power to impound drugs pending their identification and verification of the owner's authority to possess them. This could cause serious embarrassment to some patients, and disrupt continuity of treatment.

Discussions have been held with the Customs Department. There is no certain way of avoiding difficulties in every country. If, however, one of your patients is going abroad it may smooth his path if he carries no more medication than is reasonably necessary, and keeps it always in the original container with the label bearing the name of the medicament, directions for use, the patient's name, and the name and address of a pharmacy. In suitable cases it would also be helpful to provide him with a general referral note, briefly setting out the current treatment. This could be shown to a Customs Officer or Port Health Officer, or to any other medical practitioner he might consult, and should be kept handy both when leaving and returning to New Zealand.

Doctors, veterinary surgeons, dentists (and persons claiming to be members of these professions), and students are often subject to closer inquiry. When crossing the border of a country, a doctor has no more right than anyone else to be in possession of drugs unless he holds a specific import/export licence for any narcotic drugs (or in some cases "psychotropic" drugs) in his possession. Such licences are time-consuming and troublesome to obtain, but if it is essential for drugs of this nature to be carried, then a licence becomes necessary. Medical Officers of Health can advise on the procedure for applying for one.

GMS BENEFIT: ADDITIONAL RATE FOR URGENT PUBLIC HOLIDAY ATTENDANCES

Section 93A of the Social Security Act provides that where Boxing Day or New Year's Day falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the day observed in the locality as a substituted public holiday will be eligible for the additional 50c GMS benefit in respect of urgent medical attendances. Also where Boxing Day falls on a Monday the day following is a public holiday.

As Boxing Day 1970 falls on a Saturday the above provisions apply and Monday, 28 December, will no doubt be the substituted public holiday in most, if not all areas. New Year's Day, however, falls on a Friday and section 93A cannot apply beyond that day.

The additional benefit of 50c will therefore be payable for urgent attendances afforded on the following public holidays:

Christmas Day, Friday, 25 December,

Boxing Day, Saturday, 26 December,

Monday, 28 December (providing it is observed as a holiday in the area), and

New Year's Day, Friday, 1 January.

Yours faithfully,



(A. W. S. Thompson)
Director,



(A. H. Paul)
Assistant Director,

Division of Clinical Services.

GENERAL PRACTICE VACANCY: ROTHERHAM

General practitioner urgently required at Rotherham, North Canterbury. Excellent house available to rent from Council.

Additional consulting rooms available at Waiau and Culverden, 7 miles north and south. Neighbouring practices at Cheviot, 34 miles, and special area doctor at Hanmer Springs, 25 miles. (Christchurch, 62 miles.)

Guaranteed minimum \$7,250 per annum for General Medical Services, plus incentives to rural practice (C.S.L. No. 100, 28 August 1970) and Maternity Benefits. (Guarantee does not restrict the doctor's right to make extra charges to patients for General Medical Services.)

Roads are good. Wide range of social and recreational activities.

Full particulars from County Chairman, P.O. Box 14, Culverden, North Canterbury.