

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

28 April 1971.

CLINICAL SERVICES LETTER NO. 107

TO MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

(Copy to retail pharmacists)

Dear Doctor,

CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS ON LABELS

From time to time attention is drawn to inadequate instructions to patients on medicine labels.

It is seldom sufficient to write "as directed" or "m.d.u.". Patients are liable to forget verbal instructions.

In its first report, the Committee on Drug Dependency and Drug Abuse drew attention to this matter in one of its recommendations:

"That the medical and pharmaceutical professions actively consult and draw up a code of practice on—

- (a) The form of instructions to be given to patients on the use of drugs.
- (b) The explicit and clear labelling of prescribed drugs.
- (c) Procedures for ensuring that instructions given, especially to the elderly or infirm, or their agents, are correctly understood.
- (d) The recovery and disposal of unused and surplus drugs."

OVERSEAS VISITORS

Health benefits are available under the social security scheme to persons who are ordinarily resident in New Zealand, visitors from Great Britain and Northern Ireland (with the exception of seamen), and anyone else who comes to New Zealand with the intention of remaining for at least 2 years.

A child under 16 years of age is deemed to be a member of the family of whoever is responsible, for the time being, for his care and control. A New Zealand resident would therefore be entitled to health benefits for any child from overseas who is under his guardianship in New Zealand.

Persons in the Diplomatic Service, with the exception of those ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, are not entitled to health benefits.

Doctors attending a patient not entitled to health benefits should obtain payment for the full fee from the patient. If they practise under the refund system the receipt should be marked in some way to show that it does not entitle the patient to a social security refund.

Such patients should also be charged for any preparations obtained on a prescription. It would assist pharmacists if the prescriber were to indicate on the prescription that the patient is not entitled to a free supply.

MATERNITY BENEFITS: NEW SCALE OF FEES

A revised scale of fees has been approved with effect from 1 April 1971. A copy of the new scale (form H. 558) is enclosed. This replaces form Mat. B. 20 issued in April 1969.

Pilot studies are being carried out on a schedule method of claiming, which it is hoped can be made available as an alternative (where desired) to the present system.

Yours faithfully,



(A. W. S. Thompson)
Director



(A. H. Paul)
Deputy Director,

Division of Clinical Services.

"APPROVED CONDITION"

Attention is directed to the fact that the endorsement of a prescription with the words "Approved Condition" has only one meaning, viz, that the drug in question has been ordered for therapeutic purposes, but neither for contraceptive purposes nor as a pregnancy test.

A doctor, therefore, who endorsed in this manner a prescription intended for contraceptive purposes would be issuing a false certificate.