

26 March 1958

Clinical Services Letter No. 2

TO ALL MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS:

Dear Sir/Madam,

NUMBER OF DAILY SERVICES

An important amendment to the General Medical Services Regulations provides that the Minister of Health may now refer to the Disciplinary Committee for investigation "any complaint that a medical practitioner has been in the habit of providing an unduly large number of daily services, having regard to the facilities used by him in his practice and his manner of conducting it, or to either of those things".

If the committee decides that the complaint is well founded, and that "an unduly large proportion of the services afforded would not warrant payment from the Fund of the maximum amount permitted by these regulations", the Minister may, on the recommendation of the committee, direct that the amount paid from the Fund on any future claims be limited to a specified amount. At the end of three months the practitioner may apply for this direction to be revoked.

In all cases an informal preliminary inquiry will be carried out before any complaint of this nature is referred to the Disciplinary Committee. This policy has the support of the British Medical Association. High levels of claiming over limited periods—during an epidemic, for example, or the absence from practice of a medical colleague—would not lead to a complaint under the present amendment.

It is not suggested that any particular number of daily services must necessarily be regarded as unduly large. In ordinary circumstances, however, fifty services a day is generally regarded as a reasonable upper limit.

The position now is that in future any doctor averaging more than fifty services a day (Monday to Friday) is liable to investigation.

Action under these regulations may also be taken in other circumstances where it appears that the service given does not come up to accepted standards.

Yours faithfully,

*A. W. S. Thompson*

Director, Division of Clinical Services.