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WRS FORD

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Regional General Managers
 District General Managers
 Copies to FPC General Managers

Richmond House
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 London SW1A 2NS
 Telephone 071 210 3000

Dear General Managers,

EL(90)MB/108
 24 May 1990

PRIORITY TREATMENT FOR WAR PENSIONERS: HM(72)75

1. When the hospitals run by the Ministry of Pensions for the treatment of war pensioners were transferred to the National Health Service in 1953, the Government gave a clear undertaking that priority would be given to war pensioners needing examination or treatment for their pensioned disablement in NHS hospitals. We have had complaints that in some instances this commitment is not being honoured.

2. Paragraphs 2-4 of the relevant guidance (HM(72)75) read as follows;

(2) Priority is to be given at all hospitals in the National Health Service to war pensioners (including civilian and mercantile marine pensioners) needing examination or treatment as out-patients or admission as in-patients in respect of their accepted disablement, subject only to the needs of emergency or other urgent cases which must clearly take precedence. This priority is to apply whether the pensioner is referred to the hospital by a general medical practitioner or a Medical Officer of the Department of Health and Social Security.

(3) Priority should be given to war pensioners only if the need is related to the pensioner's accepted disablement and not to other conditions and general practitioners are being reminded to make it clear in referring pensioners to hospital when the condition requiring attention is connected with the accepted disablement.

(4) The term "accepted disablement" refers to the condition for which the war pensioner has been awarded a pension.

3. The term war pensioner covers those who have a pension for disablement caused by Armed Service during the 1914-18 and 1939-45 wars and service after 1945. Merchant Seamen and civilians who receive pensions for wartime injuries are also war pensioners.

4. I should be grateful if you would make sure that the provisions of HM(72)75 are being followed and, where observance of the principles in paras 2-4 of the HM are in doubt, that this is reflected in contracts.

5. I am copying this to FPC General Managers who need to read it in the context of ECN 1015 (ECL1/74).

Yours sincerely, Anthony Merifield
A.J.MERIFIELD
 REGIONAL LIAISON