

HEALTH NOTICE

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

To: **Regional Health Authorities**)
District Health Authorities)
Boards of Governors) for action
Special Health Authorities for the London)
Postgraduate Teaching Hospitals)

Community Health Councils - for information

December 1983

HEALTH SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

SUPRA-REGIONAL SERVICES

SUMMARY

This Notice describes the arrangements now in force for funding services designated as supra-regional. It also sets out the procedure for considering additional services which might be funded in this way.

INTRODUCTION

1. Earlier this year it was agreed between the Department, Regional Health Authorities and the Joint Consultants Committee that new arrangements should be introduced for funding the small number of specialised health services which, in order to be economically viable or clinically effective, need to be provided for a population substantially larger than that of any one region. Among other things this decision took into account the commitment of resources nationally which the planning of supra-regional services involves, and the difficulty for an individual authority of having to weigh this against the claims of its own local services. The aim of the new arrangements is not to insulate supra-regional services from outside pressure, or to shield them from the general need for efficiency, but to ensure that resources devoted to them are sensibly deployed and kept in balance with the needs of local services. Disturbance of existing resource allocation arrangements is being kept to a minimum.
2. The new arrangements, which came into force at the beginning of the financial year 1983/84, apply initially to four services. They are:

paediatric haemodialysis and transplantation
 spinal services
 services for the management of chorioncarcinoma
 the National Poisons Information Service

The arrangements supersede those introduced experimentally in 1980-81 under which these four services were specially treated in the calculation of RAWP targets. They do not apply in Wales, where separate arrangements exist.

ADVISORY GROUP

3. A Supra-Regional Services Advisory Group has now been established. Its terms of reference are "To advise the Secretary of State, through Chairmen of Regional Health Authorities, on the identification of services to be funded supra-regionally and on the appropriate level of provision". The members of the Group are listed in Annex A. Each year the Group will advise Ministers, through RHA Chairman, on which services should be funded supra-regionally in the forthcoming year, which units should be designated to provide them, and what level of funds should be allocated to each designated unit, and authorities will then be notified of the decisions reached on the Group's recommendations. The arrangements for considering new proposals are described below (paragraph 6).