



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY**

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*From the Minister for Health*

*MURKIN*

P A Bearpark Esq  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

4 December 1987

*Dear Andy,*

CONFIDENTIAL ENQUIRY INTO PERI-OPERATIVE DEATHS

I am writing to let you know that the Association of Anaesthetists and Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland will be issuing under embargo on 7 December (for publication on 8 December) the report of a confidential enquiry they have conducted into all deaths which occurred within thirty days of a surgical operation in 1986 in three NHS Regions (South Western, North East Thames and Northern).

Media interest and criticism of shortcomings pinpointed by the report may be directed mainly at the professions concerned, but some will also use the opportunity to criticise the state of the acute hospital services.

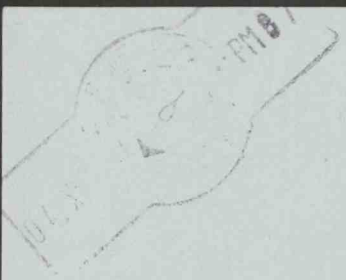
DHSS Ministers will say that they will study the findings of the report very carefully; but that they welcome the professional self-audit which the enquiry has involved, as a means of improving the standard of medical care. To encourage its further development, they will be providing £209,000 in 1988/89 to enable a similar enquiry to be started throughout the NHS in England (and will consider the level of funding required to carry it on in future years).

We shall provide you with further briefing on Tuesday, in the light of the media coverage the report receives.

*Yours sincerely,*

*Jenny Harper*

MISS J M HARPER  
Private Secretary



Nat Health

