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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY**

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*From the Secretary of State for ~~SECRET SERVICES~~ Health*

Nigel Wicks Esq  
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27 October 1988

*Dear Nigel*

**HEALTH AND MEDICINES BILL**

I enclose the line to take for Sunday lobby briefing following this morning's meeting. It has been agreed with press office here. My Secretary of State was anxious to add the last sentence on the third point.

*Yours  
And*

A J MCKEON  
Principal Private  
Secretary

HEALTH AND MEDICINES BILL: TEETH AND EYES

LINE TO TAKE

1. The Government will make no more concessions in the Health and Medicines Bill on charges for sight tests and dental examinations beyond those already given.

These are:

- free sight tests for diabetics (£8m, 1m people)
- free sight tests for glaucoma sufferers and their relatives aged over 40 (£0.5m, 50,000 people)
- some help for the 'nearly poor' i.e. those who would qualify for income support if they were to pay the charge (£0.1m, 10,000 people).

2. John Moore's announcement yesterday on uprating of benefits means that about 90,000 extra people will be exempt from the charge. The uprating from next April makes it possible for up to 45,000 extra families (i.e. about 90,000 adults) to receive Family Credit and hence exemption from charges.

3. The income from the charges in the Health and Medicines Bill is part of the extra £1.1 billion committed for the NHS in 1988/89 in the last public expenditure round. The passage of the bill is necessary to honour that commitment. The priorities now are funding in full the nurses pay award and regrading exercise and continuing to develop primary health care with the £400 million provided this year.