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The Bulletin

HEPATITIS C CAMPAIGN NOW LAUNCHED

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The Haemophilia Society has launched a campaign for Government help for people infected with the hepatitis C virus.

Speaking at the launch Society Chairman The Rev Preb Alan Tanner said: "Over 3,000 people with haemophilia have been infected with this potentially life-threatening virus through treatment with clotting factor concentrates before 1986 and over 40 have died. They were infected in exactly the same way as over 1,200 people with haemophilia contracted the HIV virus - through treatment with contaminated blood products. Yet while those infected with HIV receive financial help from the Government those with hepatitis C receive nothing."

The campaign objectives are:

- ⑤ More equitable treatment in financial terms between those people with haemophilia infected with hepatitis C (HCV) through contaminated blood products and those infected with HIV through contaminated blood products, specifically:

An across the board ex-gratia payment to all those infected with

HCV through contaminated blood products.

Access to a hardship fund for those who become ill and the dependants of those who die.

As a matter of urgency, payments to those who are already ill and the dependants of those who have died.

- ⑥ Adequate resources for haemophilia centres to enable them to provide the best possible treatment and care for people with haemophilia and hepatitis.
- ⑦ Adequate resources for research into the prognosis and treatment of HCV.
- ⑧ A public education programme that provides reassurance about the methods of transmission of hepatitis C and explains that ordinary social contact is not a means of transmission.

In addition to the campaign the Society has been active on other hepatitis matters. It has been successful in persuading the Government to give some funding to support research into the effects of living with hepatitis C. There are plans to employ a researcher for six months to investigate the effects of hepatitis C on people with haemophilia.

The Society has also received the new guidelines on the diagnosis and management of chronic liver disease in haemophilia from the Haemophilia Centre Directors' Organisation.

Commenting on the guidelines, Graham Barker Director of Services for the Society said: "The Society welcomes the publication of the guidelines, particularly the recommendation that consultant liver specialists are involved in treatment. "A factor to consider is that to follow the guidelines will probably cost the health service more. The Society will be writing to Health Authority purchasers to highlight the need for them to assign sufficient budgets."

Merseyside Fund Raising Success



Merseyside Group members Edna Griffiths and her family have been busy raising money for the Society.

A tombola held last July raised £200, and a social evening with a sponsored head shave held in November raised £1,100.

The Merseyside '100' Club is now in its second year, and has raised £600. Although 100-strong, they are on the look-out for new members so that they can increase their prize values and, consequently the money they raise. So if anyone is interested in winning money and, in doing so, raising money for the Society, contact Merseyside Group chairman Roger Kirman.