

Our ref: F496/07/CCH/LH

Chris James  
Chief Executive  
The Haemophilia Society  
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EC1N 8JB

17 October 2007

Dear Mr James

Thank you for your letter of 13 August 2007, which I received on 15 August 2007 with regard to Mark Ward. I am sorry to learn of Mr Ward's experiences at the Royal Free Hospital.

The investigation into Mr Ward's concerns has been coordinated by Mrs Lynn Hill, general manager, cancer & clinical haematology directorate and is now complete. As part of the investigation carried out information has been received from Professor **GRO-D** chair of the Haemophilia Centre, and Dr Sanjay Bhagani, consultant in infectious diseases/HIV medicine.

The issues Mr Ward has raised have been taken very seriously and have been thoroughly investigated and I am now able to respond.

I understand that Professor **GRO-D** met with Mr Ward some months ago and tried to explain the reason for the delay in informing him he had been cleared of hepatitis C. However, I am happy to provide further explanation and apology for this error. Professor **GRO-D** has reported that Mr Ward has been a patient of the Haemophilia Centre for many years and was regularly followed up by them in respect to his haemophilia and also in consultation with other specialities in relation to his chronic hepatitis C infection.

With regard to his hepatitis C infection his HCV genome equivalent level on 14 July 1999 was  $41 \times 10^6$  and levels before and after that date were similar. Between 2001 and 2004 Mr Ward was living in Birmingham and was seen by the Haemophilia Centre there. When he returned to the Royal Free Haemophilia Centre in 2004 we repeated his HCV RNA on 13 April 2004 and it was 15,000 iu/ml indicating chronic ongoing infection.

Mr Ward was later admitted as an in patient under Dr Margaret Johnson during May 2005 and a sample was taken for HCV status in which RNA was not detected. After discharge Mr Ward was closely followed up in the Ian Charleson Day Centre, having had 9 separate appointments between 15 July 2005 and 7 December 2005. Regrettably, the fact that Mr Ward had spontaneously cleared Hepatitis C was not noted or commented on at any of these visits and falls below the standard of care we aim to give our patients.

Mr Ward was next seen in the Haemophilia Centre at the joint liver/haemophilia clinic on 25 September 2006. The previous negative HCV result was then noted by the haemophilia team and a letter sent to Mr Ward saying that as of May 2005 his HCV viral load was undetectable and that he should return for it to be rechecked. An appointment was given for that purpose to see Dr Chowdury on 14 November 2006, which Mr Ward did not attend.

Both Professor **GRO-D** and Dr Johnson would like to extend their apologies to Mr Ward for this failure in communication. It is unacceptable that this important information was not conveyed to Mr Ward and we would like to assure him that this complaint has been taken very seriously and the importance of effective and timely communication between specialities will be reinforced.

Unfortunately, Mr Ward did not attend his appointment with Dr Chowdury on 14 November 2006, at which the test would have been repeated and the implications discussed if confirmed. It is possible that Mr Ward did not receive these letters confirming his appointment.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for contacting us with Mr Ward's concerns. The opinions of those who use our services give valuable insight into patients' care that we provide and areas where improvements might be made.

I hope this response addresses Mr Ward's concerns, if you require more information or if you wish to discuss this response, please write to Mrs Lynn Hill, general manager, cancer & clinical haematology directorate or contact her on **GRO-C** who will be able to advise of possible local resolution and if necessary, arrange to meet with Mr Ward and the relevant staff and discuss alternative options under the NHS complaints procedure. If following your further contact with Mrs Hill, Mr Ward remains dissatisfied with our approach to resolving his outstanding concerns, please write to me directly.

Yours sincerely,

**Andrew Way**  
Chief Executive