Witness Name: Terence Michael O'Shea
Statement No:WITN3730001
Dated: 13th October 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF TERENCE MICHAEL O'SHEA

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry rules 2006 dated 17th September 2019. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference.

I, Terence Michael O'Shea, will say as follows:-

1. Introduction

1. My name is Terence Michael O'Shea. My date of birth is GRO-C 1952 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I retired as a self employed taxi driver in 2011 and I live with my wife, Patricia.

2. I discovered I had developed hepatitis C around July 2016, after receiving infected blood products in 1979.

3. On the 14th August 2019, I was hospitalised at the University Hospital of Wales (UHW) for an internal bleed at the bottom of my oesophagus. While I was in hospital I was given a scan and I was told I have developed terminal liver cancer and given three to six months left to live.

2. How Infected

1. I believe I came to be infected with hepatitis C after I fell off a ladder and broke both my back and ankles in October 1979. I was hospitalised at Cardiff Royal Infirmary (CRI) Spinal Unit for two months. During that time I received a blood transfusion as parts of my vertebral discs were removed and a clamp was inserted into my back. I had another operation twelve months later to remove the clamp, but I was not given any blood products for this. I have not received any other blood products since October 1979.

2. I was never given any information about the risk of being exposed to infected blood products at the time of my operation or afterwards.

3. I found out that I had developed hepatitis C around July 2015. Before this, I felt ill for quite a long time, around five to six years previous. I was suffering from extreme fatigue and I kept visiting my GP who sent me to the UHW and the Royal Infirmary for tests on several occasions but nothing was found. A consultant whose name I can't remember at the UHW told me that my fatigue was caused by smoking over forty cigarettes a day, even though I have never smoked!

4. In 2015, the portal vein from my liver detached, causing internal bleeding and I was hospitalised at the UHW. During my time in hospital, I was asked if I was an active homosexual, an intervening drug user and an alcoholic. Looking back I believe they asked in case I had hepatitis C but they did not mention it to me once. One of the gastroenterology doctors, Dr GRO-D told me the reason for my internal bleeding was that I was a chronic alcoholic, even though I had no medical history of alcohol abuse and I have always drunk in

moderation. I was advised that I should seek rehabilitative help for my 'alcoholism'.

5. I visited my GP after this who thought that it was strange I had been told this by the UHW. He described me as an "uneventful" person and if I had had alcohol issues, I would have been a more problematic patient. My GP arranged for me to have blood tests and then discovered I had developed hepatitis C.

6. Once I was aware I had hepatitis C, I was given very little information on how to manage my infection; I only knew what I found from the internet. I saw Dr Andrew Godkin around three and a half years ago after I was diagnosed who gave me what I believe was called Harvoni to clear up the hepatitis C but besides this, I was given no further information. Once Dr Godkin was involved I felt like my treatment improved greatly, but I feel the information I was given about my illness was not adequate. The Consultants at the UHW blamed my illness on either smoking or alcohol abuse, neither of which I have a history of doing. If it wasn't for my GP, I would have died and they would have put chronic alcoholic on my death certificate.

7. I feel that information should have been given to me earlier. I shouldn't have needed to keep going back to the doctors for five years without knowing what was wrong with me. If it wasn't for my GP, then I would never have had anything communicated to me. The hospital just blamed my condition on alcohol. They admitted later on that it was nothing to do with alcohol. They may have thought this as I have cirrhosis of the liver, but a year ago I was told the hospital had removed chronic alcoholism from my file. When I saw Dr GRO-D a few weeks ago he asked me about my drinking, even though he now knows it has nothing to do with alcohol and that I have been diagnosed with cancer.

8. I wasn't given any information about the risk of infection to my wife or other people. My wife decided to get tested for hepatitis C based on what information she found on the internet. Fortunately the test result was negative.

3. Other infections

1. I haven't been diagnosed with any other infections other than hepatitis C as a result of being given infected blood products.

4. Consent

1. I don't believe I have been tested or treated without my knowledge or consent. I have wondered if I was tested for research purposes but I am unsure.

2. It seems they wanted to sweep everything under the carpet and blame my illness on alcohol. I wasn't given full information. I wrote to the UHW about two years ago and requested to see my medical records but they informed me that they had been lost.

5. Impact

1. The main physical effects I have suffered from being infected with hepatitis C are loss of appetite and extreme tiredness. This meant I couldn't do things I enjoyed such as walking my dog, playing snooker and taking my great grandson out to the beach.

2. After I had the Harvoni treatment, I got better for four years and I carried on doing all these things but now I can't do them again because of my cancer. I also have liver cirrhosis caused by the hepatitis C.

3. The main mental effect is that recently I found out I had liver cancer and I was told I have three to six months to live. I had a scan six months ago which was clear but after I was hospitalised on the 14th August 2019 I was told that the

cancer was aggressive and I was going to die. It can't be treated in any way, as any chemotherapy or radiotherapy I had would make me too sick. Unfortunately it can't be removed by an operation either. I'm seeing my doctor on the 11th October 2019 who will give me medication to try and slow down the cancer growth.

4. I haven't suffered many side effects of treatment for hepatitis C. After my hepatitis C cleared up around three years ago, I was still quite weak and fatigued. I took Harvoni from around October 2016 till Christmas. It was quite a new drug. It had been approved in April 2016 so I didn't get many of the side effects that were common with the old treatments. I did have to take drugs which unfortunately I can't remember the name of to help stop internal bleeding which caused hallucinations, but I was told to cut back and was eventually given a replacement drug.

5. I haven't faced any difficulties in accessing treatment, but I believe I should have been told five years earlier about my condition.

6. My hepatitis C hasn't impacted any medical treatment I have received. When I was first diagnosed my dentist didn't seem to be too happy with having me in the surgery. She didn't say anything to me but I always seemed to spend more time in the waiting room than I did with the dentist. Once I gave her a letter from a specialist saying my hepatitis C had cleared it was fine.

7. When I first found out I had hepatitis C, there wasn't much of an impact on my family and social life apart from being exhausted. I did spend a lot of time in bed but the Harvoni cleared up my hepatitis C. Everyone has been really supportive and I didn't experience any stigma associated with the hepatitis C.

8. I did not suffer any educational effects. I did however suffer work related effects. In 2011 I had to retire at the age of 62.. I was a self employed taxi

driver but I was too weak to continue. I'm fortunate I didn't suffer any financial effects as I don't have a mortgage.

9. There has been a huge impact on my family. My sister, Christina is trying to help where she can by walking my dog but she is absolutely devastated. My wife is devastated and it's had a huge emotional impact on her. My close friends are also very upset.

6. Treatment/Care Support

1. I have not faced any difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment, care or support as a result of my hepatitis C and counselling has never been offered to me. I was asked if I needed any assistance or help at home so I believe if I had asked they would have offered it to me.

7. Financial Assistance

1. I do not currently receive assistance from any trusts or funds. I have received a form from the Skipton fund, but I have not yet completed it. I tried to apply for personal independence payments ("PIP") around three years ago, but I was rejected as I didn't get enough points. I believe this was because I did not look physically disabled. I do feel this was unfair. Even though I believe I am entitled to financial assistance it is not about the money. I am more concerned about my health.

8. Other Issues

1. I have not taken part in earlier litigation concerning the use of infected blood products. I was assessed for PIP by a doctor GRO-C who had a sister that had hepatitis C. She suggested I sue the NHS, but even though I made enquiries no one at the time wanted to get involved once they knew what it was about. The NHS have so many legal teams I doubt I would have gotten anywhere anyway.

2. I don't believe I have any other documents which may be relevant to the Inquiry. I have tried to access my medical records, but the UHW said that they couldn't find them. I was told that all the documents from CRI had been destroyed when it shut down. I thought they would have had access to my GP records but these too were lost. I didn't try to access them again as I would have just been blocked by the NHS.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed. GRO-C ....

Dated....13/10/2019..........

GRO-C