

Witness Name: Richard Marsella

Statement No: WITN2773001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: October 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF RICHARD MARSELLA

I, Richard Marsella, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Richard Marsella. I live at GRO-C
GRO-C My date of birth is GRO-C 1951. I worked in the vending machine industry for over thirty years until my wife, Barbara, became ill in April 2018.
2. I make this statement in relation to my wife, Barbara Marsella, who was born on 19 October 1953. She is providing her own statement to the Inquiry under Statement No. **WITN2772001**. Barbara was infected with Hepatitis C as a result of receiving contaminated blood products.
3. **This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my wife's full medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.**

Section 2. How infected

4. I would like to refer to my wife's statement in relation to the blood products she received, the details of her infections and the information provided to her at the time of diagnosis.
5. I was informed that Barbara had been infected with Hepatitis C virtually straight away upon my arrival at the hospital.

Section 3. Other Infections

6. I would like to refer to my wife's statement regarding any other infections she may have received.

Section 4. Consent

7. I would like to refer to my wife's statement for information regarding consent to treatment and testing.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

8. My wife was once a lively and energetic woman. She was full of vigour and able to fit so much into one day. Prior to the decline in her health, the two of us hosted parties and went on holidays and day trips. We enjoyed our lives to the full.
9. Although not obvious to myself, our friends and family started commenting on Barbara's health. She slowly had less energy to go out and was unable to do as much as she used to. We didn't make much of it at the time.
10. After her health really declined and after discovering that she had Hepatitis C and end stage liver disease; everything changed. Suddenly, we had to make lifestyle changes to better her health. We took extra care of her diet and

ensured that whatever was left of her liver, was protected and well maintained.

11. This meant that we cut down on sugar, salt and fatty foods. Everyday has been a battle to decide what to eat for dinner. If ever we go out for a meal, we have to carefully examine which foods are the least harmful to Barbara's liver. Obviously, this has taken a toll on our social life as we try not to eat out as much as we used to.
12. In addition to having Hepatitis C and end stage liver disease, Barbara was also diagnosed with type 2 diabetes which has progressively worsened over time. Initially it was diet controlled, but now she has to take metformin and even in that, her dosage was increased from 500mg to 1000mg.
13. Barbara and I used to enjoy going to the theatre in London which required travel on trains and the underground. Not only was it over-congested and exhausting for her, when added to the stress of finding a healthy restaurant to eat in, it became a deterrent from going at all. We still try to go every now and then to maintain our previous standard of living, but it is not the same anymore.
14. Furthermore, if there is a wedding or a family occasion, we always have to consider Barbara's health on the day of the event. If she is not feeling well, we may have to cancel our plans. Similarly, in the past we have had to cancel our holidays with friends. We cannot commit to anything in advance as Barbara's health can change spontaneously.
15. On some days, Barbara doesn't even want to get out of bed. When I go shopping, I try to encourage her to come with me, but in general she has very little energy in the day. For this reason I have taken over all the household maintenance.
16. Barbara cannot handle the cooking in the house as she often forgets to add certain ingredients into meals. This impacts the taste of the food; sometimes

she adds too much salt or sugar, or when she makes eggs on toast, she will cook the eggs forgetting to put the bread into the toaster.

17. I am so happy that Barbara is still with me today, however it has been very difficult coping with the constant worry that she could fall ill again. Her health is generally okay, but can decline rapidly in a very short space of time.

18. In terms of the stigma associated with Hepatitis C, we have never hidden the fact that Barbara was infected and luckily have never faced any hostility from friends and family. On the other hand, during every hospital visit, the staff at the hospital questioned Barbara on her alcohol consumption. Barbara has already stated that she no longer drinks alcohol and doesn't even fancy it anymore, so they should not pester her about it over and over.

19. Our son Mark lives in Epsom, whilst our daughter Penny lives quite nearby. Both of them have their own lives and Mark works very long hours, as does our daughter's husband. However they still worry about us a lot. We try to shelter them from Barbara's ill health as we do not want to give them cause for concern. We know that if we needed them, they would be there for us.

20. Barbara and I found ourselves in a position where neither of us could work. This obviously caused a financial strain, however prior to this; we never claimed any financial support or benefits. I knew that to be eligible for such assistance I would have to complete extensive forms and that deterred me from making a claim.

21. Financially we have struggled to cope. We are okay now, but in the past we had to sell our house and downsize to pay our mortgage off. Recently we decided to move back to where we were. This however will cost us money and significant stress. Our current home is in a cheaper area but we get noise pollution from air traffic overhead. As we are older now, we want to live in a quieter area and don't want to live on a main road.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

22. I would like to refer to my wife's statement for information regarding her treatment, care and support.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

23. I would like to refer to my wife's statement for information regarding financial assistance.

Section 8. Other Issues

24. I felt that there were a lot of firms who did not want to take our case because we weren't a case regarding a haemophiliac who received regular blood products. It took us a long time to reach this stage.

25. I follow the Inquiry more closely than Barbara does and have conducted more research into the matter.

26. If this happened to me, I would be at the Houses of Parliament complaining about what they did to me. Barbara, on the other hand, has no animosity towards anyone. She dealt with it in a healthy way. I get very angry about it and feel somebody should be named and shamed.

27. The Government should admit their mistakes and deliver financial recompense to all those lives that have been impacted by contaminated blood. These diseases were life threatening and even today, you never know of the impact it could bring.

28. I believe that the Government is still trying to cover things up and not enough exposure is being given to the matter. I speak to people about our experiences and contaminated blood and they say this is the first they are even hearing of it.

Anonymity

29. I do not wish to remain anonymous.

30. I do not want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

GRO-C

Dated.....

17/10/19