Witness Name: Margaret Moynihan
Statement No.: WITN4996001
Exhibits: **WITN4996002-4**
Dated: X 14th November 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MARGARET MOYNIHAN

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 13 May 2021.

I, Margaret Moynihan, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Margaret Moynihan. My date of birth is GRO-C 1955 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am retired. I was a housewife prior to this. I also briefly worked in advertising for a few years. I live alone after the recent death of my partner, Charlie. I have three children. I intend to speak about my infection with Hepatitis C (HCV) believed to have been contracted from a blood transfusion following the birth of my son in 1971. In particular, I intend to discuss the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment received and the impact it had on the lives of myself and my family.

2. I can confirm that I have chosen not to have legal representation and that the Inquiry Investigator has explained the anonymity process to

me. I am not seeking anonymity. I have not been involved in any litigation.

Section 2. How Infected

3. In 1971, aged 15, I fell pregnant. My mum had died in the Christmas of 1970. I didn't tell anybody because my family were very Catholic. I was shunned and sent to a mother and baby home. On a Sunday afternoon, I was admitted to the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow. My son Michael was born two days later on the evening of GRO-C 1971. It was a lengthy labour as I was quite slight. They finally decided to perform a caesarean after which I was in Hospital for 10 days. I can remember it was a really traumatic birth.

4. Although I don't specifically recall being given a blood transfusion, I am unable to remember much concrete detail from this time as I was kept very sedated. The nuns from the mother and baby home handled everything and I wasn't involved in the decisions surrounding the birth. I also think my mind has blocked memories from this time due to the trauma I experienced. I was only a young girl and can recall screaming my head off as I thought I was going to die.

5. The nuns pressured me into having the baby adopted. I wouldn't let it happen. My father came to pick me up after 10 days. I was so weak I was in a wheelchair. I think I was kept sedated so that the baby could be taken away without me noticing. It was a very emotional time. My son was actually taken away from me and placed elsewhere. 10 months later, I found out where he was and managed to retrieve him.

6. Between 1983 and 1985 I had a couple of miscarriages, both of which were dealt with at GRO-D. The first miscarriage was fairly early but I know that I had a D&C. The miscarriage in 1985 was a late term baby and spontaneous. I then had a D&C immediately after

the miscarriage was handled. I do not recall any need for a blood transfusion on either of these occasions.

7. My next pregnancy was in 1986 with a different father. I had relocated from GRO-C to GRO-C was given an elective caesarean and gave birth to my second son Lewis on GRO-C 1986 at Aberdeen Maternity Hospital. I was in the main hospital for three days following which I was transferred to Inveraray for eight days. The birth went to plan as far as I can recall.

8. My daughter Catherine was born on GRO-C 1988. She was also born via a caesarean section. I was in the maternity hospital for three or four days with a following eight days in Inveraray to recuperate. After Catherine's birth, I requested a sterilisation as I did not want any more children. That was the last major operation I have had until my craniotomies in 2002. I do not recall there being any complications. In the window between Michael's birth in 1971 in the Southern General, Glasgow and Catherine's in 1988, the practise of caesarean sections had advanced noticeably; it was a far less risky procedure.

9. On 1 December 2002 I experienced a burst brain aneurism, following which I had two craniotomies at GRO-D. I do not know if I was given a blood transfusion on these occasions. After the first operation, I recovered in hospital for several weeks. I was very poorly at that time. I had the next operation a few months later in 2003. My daughter, who was 14 at the time, can remember visiting me. She was told a lot of information by her grandmother and does not recall anything about me receiving a blood transfusion at any point.

10. In 2013 or 2014, a doctor from Inverurie health centre phoned me at home. His name may have been Dr GRO-D but I cannot be 100% certain. He said that following advice from the hospital, the surgery was advised to conduct check-ups on patients for Hepatitis C. I believe I was told it was part of a project. I was stunned and to a degree upset,

receiving this news out of the blue. I could not see why it should concern me. Nonetheless, I went to see the doctor for blood to be taken. Shortly afterwards, I was informed that I had Hepatitis C. This news initially came via a phone call. I don't think that such a possible life changing diagnosis should come by phone – who knows what the impact may be on the person receiving it.

11. I was then referred to the GRO-D at the GRO-D GRO-D for a consultation with the liver specialists. I was told that I had Hepatitis C, Genotype 1A. I was introduced to GRO-D the blood nurse who oversaw the testing on my liver whilst providing practical information about treatments. I have since found letters, apparently from my gastroenterologist, GRO-D yet, I have never been so much as acquainted with him.

12. In all honesty, I can't remember what information my doctor provided me regarding the nature of the infection and the contingent precautions I should take. I do not recall receiving any information about how to mitigate the risks including of a sexual nature. I was accompanied by my partner Charlie. There was no suggestion that he should be tested. GRO-C GRO-C I don't think this was recommended to me by any member of medical staff.

13. I have never been an IV drug user. I have never been medically treated abroad nor do I have tattoos or piercings. I have only had three main romantic partners in my life. Therefore, I can only conceive that I contracted Hepatitis C from a blood transfusion administered during the birth of one of my children, most likely Michael in 1971. As mentioned, I was very slight and weak which resulted in a protracted and complicated labour and then a caesarean delivery.

14. In 2015, I was diagnosed with kidney cancer. I was on Methotrexate for a while to treat my arthritis. I was required to visit the nurse regularly as

the medication can damage the liver. It was during one of these appointments that I was diagnosed with cancer. Half of my left kidney was removed. As far as I am aware, I was not given a transfusion on this occasion.

15. I have been asked by the Inquiry Investigator about an incident where I encountered someone at a party who had been injecting drugs. Shortly after my diagnosis, during an appointment with a Hepatitis C nurse, GRO-D, I was asked about the possible sources of infection. Some years ago, I was at a party. I walked into the bathroom to find someone unconscious with a needle still stuck in his arm. I steadied his legs to stop him from shaking. However, I had no contact with the needle.

16. I was very honest with the nurse about this. Yet, this incident was misrepresented as it was typed up. In a letter to Dr L Myles, on 3 October 2013, GRO-D indicated that whilst I had not injected drugs myself, I had helped to 'inject someone with drugs who was unable to inject themselves'. This is untrue. I was only trying to stop him from falling off the toilet. I was devastated that the incident had been re-laid so inaccurately. This letter is exhibited at **WITN4996002.**

17. In hindsight, I question why my Hepatitis C infection was not identified sooner. Having obtained an expansive set of medical records from GRO-D I have discovered that I had abnormal liver function tests in 1990. I have also seen, much to my shock and in fact horror, that I was found to be positive for the virus in 2003. This is reflected on page 2 of the letter referred to above at **WITN4996002.** Yet, it wasn't until 2013 that this information was communicated to me.

18. I do not think the medical staff were transparent about why I was to be tested then. I was led to believe that I was part of a random sample of patients from the practise who were being tested for the virus. Yet it transpires that I was part of a Hep C follow up project when my PCR

was rechecked. Why was I not told about my positive status in 2003? I could have been treated earlier if that was the case. Now I wonder how much of an impact the virus being in my system had on my kidneys and subsequent cancer diagnosis

19. I was so disappointed to realise that medical professionals were aware of my infection in 2003 but omitted to inform me for another 10 years. From looking at my medical notes, I can see that I was in a 'ward 25' in 2003. I think this must have been when I was having one of my craniotomies. Catherine thinks this was a recovery ward. It was during this time that my infection was first identified. A Fibro scan in 2015 indicated cirrhosis but I am unable to recall if I was given the extent of the damage, if any.

Section 3. Other Infections

20. I have never been tested or treated for any other viruses as far as I am aware including for HIV. This was never recommended to me.

21. I noticed from one of my letters that I was diagnosed with Hepatitis A but I can't remember when this was. I can never recall either having or being treated for the infection.

Section 4. Consent

22. As previously mentioned, during one of my brain operations in 2003, I was tested and diagnosed with HCV yet at no point did I consent to the testing nor was I informed of the results. I am not even sure if my GP knew.

23. To reiterate, when the doctor contacted me in 2013 to inform me that I had been selected to take part in a project to test patients from the surgery for HCV, I assumed that I had been randomly selected. To learn that I had been purposefully chosen as there was something

known to be wrong with me already, made me angry and upset. I believe that they should have been transparent with me from the beginning about why I was being tested. They must have been aware of the mistake.

24. I was never provided with any information about the potential risks of blood transfusions should I need one and that was true for all three of my caesareans.

<u>Section 5. Impact</u>

25. I was devastated to learn of my diagnosis with Hepatitis C. I felt that there was a big hole in my life. I feel that had I not been infected; my life would have been completely different. I was shocked and horrified by what had happened to me. Then I judged myself. But as I explored all possible avenues of infection, I knew it must have come from one of the caesareans either at Glasgow or Aberdeen.

26. It is difficult to pinpoint the precise physical and psychological effects of having Hepatitis C as I carried the virus for many years without my knowledge. Sometimes I didn't feel well but I couldn't put my finger on what was wrong. Once I found out I had the virus, many of the health conditions with which I've suffered over the years, made a lot of sense. I went on to find out last night what the effects of the virus are if left untreated. I have suffered with peripheral neuropathy for years. This caused a burning sensation in my finger-tips which at times was very painful and has worsened since my diagnosis. I take amitriptyline to treat this.

27. Over the years, I have experienced periods of confusion and brain fog. I attributed this to having had brain aneurisms and the resultant craniotomies. I still have moments of vacancy and brain fog. My daughter calls them 'events'. Sometimes I can't get the words out which is worsened when I feel tired. It is at times very difficult for me to

keep up with what's going on around me. I always previously put this down to the aneurisms but now I've realised that this could be caused by Hepatitis C. It is still an ongoing problem for me and I have deteriorated further to an extent.

28. I began to experience dreadful psoriasis just after I had Catherine in 1988 or 1989. I've never been able to shake that. I sought light treatment after this significantly worsened but as I was covered head to toe in psoriasis, they initially couldn't find a part of my body clear enough to test the treatment. Eventually, the light therapy treatment worked but only to a degree. I also started to experience hair loss a couple of years ago. And again, this is a continual problem which is still prevalent today.

29. If I was feeling ill I blamed the brain operation and my alcohol consumption. I stopped drinking on 6 April 1999. Since then, not a drop of alcohol has passed my lips. If I had known that I had Hepatitis C, I would certainly have moderated my alcohol consumption – I would have had to for my health. Now my liver has regrown and is not in a bad condition. One of the medications that I take for arthritis also affects the liver.

30. My depression was first diagnosed when Michael was five or six years old. I attributed the depression to moving from GRO-C to GRO-D Everything was up in the air at the time and I suffered from periods of anxiety but I wonder if it was exacerbated by the HCV. I have been on medication for depression intermittently ever since.

31. After my diagnosis in 2013, I spoke with GRO-D, a Liver Nurse at GRO-D about possible treatments. At one of the consultations, I was told that there was a medication that would be available in a few months. In 2015, after a four to six month wait, I began a 12-week course of Harvoni at GRO-D. I was given two different tablets, one per day. I was told it cost around £65k. I think that

was one of the reasons why I didn't push for financial assistance as I felt like I was fortunate receiving this expensive treatment. During this time, I was regularly monitored and scanned. I did not experience any significant side effects albeit that I was fatigued, nauseous and generally under the weather. The treatment was successful. I was just so relieved that something was being done.

32. In around 2010, I began to notice a progressive deterioration in my hand-eye coordination. I am very clumsy and drop things a lot. Getting ready to come here was an effort. Trying to string words together is also a problem. Again, I blamed it on the brain surgery but in retrospect I think the Hepatitis C may have had an impact.

33. An extract from my medical records exhibited at **WITN4996003**, dated 15 October 2013 demonstrates the plethora of health conditions from which I suffer alongside the numerous medications I take to treat these problems.

34. As previously mentioned, in 2015, following a fibro-scan for my liver, I was diagnosed with kidney cancer. Part of my left kidney was removed. It has never been indicated to me that HCV could have impacted on my kidneys, but I do not know. It is only last night when I was preparing to speak to the Inquiry Investigator that I have started to connect the dots and realise that a lot of my health problems were potentially caused or exacerbated by the Hepatitis C which went undetected for at least several decades.

35. I had to inform my dentist about my HCV status. Whilst there was no change in the treatment I received, the personal interaction changed. I don't think she was very happy about it. I felt judged; it was as if a wall went up and there was now a distance between us.

36. To this day, I continue to feel dirty. I think there is still a stigma surrounding Hepatitis C, even if it is my own perception of stigma. In the past, it was generally associated with drug abuse. I am always

aware that the virus is in my system even if it is no longer active. If I have to see the doctor, I mention it if I believe it is necessary.

37. I started to obsess over the possible circumstance in which I could have contracted the infection. At times, this consumed me. I also had an overwhelming sense of guilt in relation to the safety of my family who I could have inadvertently infected. Catherine had a small boy at the time who I had looked after for a while. I was terrified that I could have passed the infection on to him GRO-C GRO-C

38. My family were also worried about my health. My children were understanding, albeit they were angry about the circumstances in which I was infected and the delay in informing me of my diagnosis. To this day, I have moments where I become quite angry about what has happened to me. Once, I feel myself getting angry, I try to deal with my emotions as it will serve no purpose and I feel the ongoing stress it causes is detrimental to my personal health, both mental and physical – I have enough to deal with already.

39. My diagnosis affected my relationship. Having sex remained a problem until I cleared the virus. I always felt guilty when I realised how in all the years that I was infected without my knowledge, I could have caused him terrible damage. No one wants to think that they could have passed a life-threatening illness to someone they love. He was also angry about the way I contracted the virus. GRO-C GRO-C

40. I have not been able to donate blood because of the problems with my veins. When I tried to donate in Aberdeen in 1982, the nurse was unable to find a vein. I have never attempted since. I assumed that it was because my veins weren't very good. I wonder now if they knew that I carried HCV or some other infection.

41. I was very disappointed to learn that I couldn't leave my body to science. I had always wanted to do this since I was a child. I was told that this was because of my Hepatitis C. This was a big blow for me. I was told that it would be advisable to be cremated when I die.

42. Over the course of my illness with Hepatitis C and subsequently my diagnosis with kidney cancer, I have met some really fabulous individuals working within the NHS, particularly at Banff Hospital. They deal with people like myself all the time yet I was made to feel like an individual rather than simply the next appointment. I was led to feel that I wasn't alone and that there were others in similar circumstances to my own.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

43. I don't think I was ever offered psychological support, neither when diagnosed nor during treatment. I met my current partner Charlie in 1999. From thereon, we were a couple. He was trained as a social worker and was experienced in dealing with problems such as my own. He was my sounding board. I was lucky that I met him. When my brain was very bad after the first operation, he looked after my two kids who weren't the easiest!

Section 7. Financial Assistance

44. I was directed to the Skipton fund by Lorna Bailey, the blood nurse at GRO-D. I applied in March 2015. I do not remember any particular difficulties with the application process, albeit that filling in forms with personal details is always emotionally difficult for me.

45. My application was rejected in May 2015. I was very upset. I didn't tell Charlie or my family for weeks as I was so disappointed. I was very upset to read the nurse' statement on page 4 of my application, that I had assisted an IV drug user in injecting drugs. It was a complete

misrepresentation and thwarted my opportunity to receive financial assistance.

46. When my application was rejected in part due to my medical history having been recorded inaccurately, on 23 May 2016, I wrote to my gastroenterologist GRO-D. I requested that my records be amended to reflect that I had never been in contact with any intravenous drug use, user or paraphernalia and that I could have only contracted the virus during one of my three caesarean sections. I also explained how after my brain operations, I can experience difficulty finding the right words under pressure. In retrospect, I also think this may be the result of having had Hepatitis C for several decades. This letter is exhibited at **WITN4996004.**

47. I did not receive a reply to that letter and as far as I am aware the matter remains unresolved. It is something that I will look into again when I am in better health as I feel most strongly about the way I was portrayed.

48. When I was put onto Harvoni and told how expensive the treatment was, I felt so lucky to be receiving such a valuable treatment. I was very paranoid about losing the tablets. I planned to appeal to the Skipton fund and filled out the application forms but never sent them off. I think my determination to seek financial assistance was impacted by my knowledge of the expense of the treatment. I felt like I had already received the support that I deserved. My daughter feels angry that this information is divulged to patients as if medical staff are trying to make us feel guilty for draining the NHS' resources.

49. The years between 2013 and 2016 were not great years for me; from my diagnosis with Hepatitis C, my subsequent diagnosis with kidney cancer, culminating in my rejection from the Skipton fund. That final rejection made me feel somehow that it was my fault even though I knew their reasons for rejecting my application were wholly unfounded.

Section 8. Other Issues

50. People like myself will probably be dead before the government accept accountability for the circumstances in which tens of thousands were infected with HIV and Hepatitis viruses. I feel that the government are delaying taking any responsibility and are simply waiting for us to die so that they can avoid it altogether. I continue to feel angry and frustrated that it took several decades for my infection to be identified and I find it difficult to shake the occasional feelings of bitterness I experience when I think it took a further 10 years to inform me after my original diagnosis. How different might my whole life have been?

Statement of Truth

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

Signed X GRO-C

Dated X 14th November 2022