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MSD UK in New Tender Collaboration with NHS England Aiming To Help Eliminate Hepatitis C In The UK By 2025

NHS ‘Strategic Elimination Tender’ for hepatitis C announced today¹ means MSD will deliver services to find, support and treat people living with the virus which is linked to liver cancer²

Hoddesdon, 30th April, 2019 - Today, MSD (tradename of Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, N.J., USA (NYSE: MRK)) confirmed that it will deliver a range of new services for people with hepatitis C in partnership with NHS England (NHSE) over the next 3 years. This initiative forms part of the hepatitis C strategy announced by NHSE in January 2018³ and confirms MSD’s commitment to help see Hepatitis C eliminated in the UK by 2025.

The treatment of hepatitis C has advanced significantly in recent years with the arrival of Direct Acting Antivirals (DAAs) which achieve high cure rates with improved side-effect profiles, comparing favourably with previous treatments. However, the NHS has faced a challenge in reaching all of the people who may benefit from treatment, since the majority are linked to marginalised groups in society.⁴

“We are embarking on an ambitious partnership with the NHS that aims to significantly accelerate the UK’s progress towards hepatitis C elimination,” said Louise Houson, Managing Director, MSD UK. “The NHS has led a first-of-its-kind process to combine the way it uses medicines with a range of innovative industry-led services. To deliver those services, MSD will now seek to work with NHS providers, local authority services, community organisations and other companies to align the diverse elements of the whole pathway for those at risk of hepatitis C infection. If we can get this right, today’s news promises to bring some exciting outcomes for patients in the future.”

Public Health England estimates that 200,000 people are living with chronic hepatitis C infection in the UK and it is believed that the recent fall in serious hepatitis-C related liver disease could be attributed to the increasing availability of DAA medicines⁴. However, surveys have indicated that, although around half of those who inject drugs will become infected with hepatitis C⁴, at least one-third remain unaware of their hepatitis C status⁴.

MSD has proposed a range of services as part of its response to the NHS process over the past year. These include informatics solutions in primary care, innovative hepatitis C testing methods targeted to key groups and patient support provided by people with lived experience

of the virus and its treatment. The precise scope of the specific services that MSD will offer in the future will be decided as part of ongoing discussions with NHSE and providers and partners at a national and local level.

Further information on Hepatitis C can be found on the NHS “Health A to Z” resource online⁵: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hepatitis-c/>.

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About MSD

MSD has been at the forefront of the response to chronic hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection and has been engaged in research to address the infection since the discovery of the virus in the late 1980s. In 1991, MSD developed the first approved therapy for chronic HCV and has brought other HCV therapies to the market, including more recently a DAA medicine.

MSD believes that the remarkable scientific research that has led to the discovery, development and delivery of a DAA medicine should lead to the opportunity of a cure for each person in the UK living with chronic HCV infection.

For more than a century, MSD, a leading global biopharmaceutical company, has been bringing forward medicines and vaccines for the world’s most challenging diseases. MSD is a trade name of Merck & Co., Inc., with headquarters in Kenilworth, N.J., U.S.A. Through our prescription medicines, vaccines, biologic therapies and animal health products, we work with customers and operate in more than 140 countries to deliver innovative health solutions. We also demonstrate our commitment to increasing access to health care through far-reaching policies, programmes and partnerships. Today, MSD continues to be at the forefront of research to advance the prevention and treatment of diseases that threaten people and communities around the world. For more information, visit www.msd-UK.com and connect with us on Twitter [@MSDintheUK](https://twitter.com/MSDintheUK).

Forward-Looking Statement of Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, N.J., USA

This news release of Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, N.J., USA (the “company”) includes “forward-looking statements” within the meaning of the safe harbor provisions of the U.S. Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements are based upon the current beliefs and expectations of the company’s management and are subject to significant risks and uncertainties. **There can be no guarantees with respect to pipeline products that the products will receive the necessary regulatory approvals or that they will prove to be commercially successful.** If underlying assumptions prove inaccurate or risks or uncertainties materialize, actual results may differ materially from those set forth in the forward-looking statements.

Risks and uncertainties include but are not limited to, general industry conditions and competition; general economic factors, including interest rate and currency exchange rate fluctuations; the impact of pharmaceutical industry regulation and health care legislation in the United States and internationally; global trends toward health care cost containment; technological advances, new products and patents attained by competitors; challenges inherent in new product development, including obtaining regulatory approval; the company's ability to accurately predict future market conditions; manufacturing difficulties or delays; financial instability of international economies and sovereign risk; dependence on the effectiveness of the company's patents and other protections for innovative products; and the exposure to litigation, including patent litigation, and/or regulatory actions.

The company undertakes no obligation to publicly update any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise. Additional factors that could cause results to differ materially from those described in the forward-looking statements can be found in the company's 2017 Annual Report on Form 10-K and the company's other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) available at the SEC's Internet site (www.sec.gov).

References

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- ⁴ Public Health England. Hepatitis C in the UK. 2018 Report. Available online at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/732469/HCV_IN_THE_UK_2018_UK.pdf
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