

Bad Blood

A CAUTIONARY TALE A FILM BY MARILYN NESS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

An Evening to Remember, Recognize, and Reform... *The gay rights and hemophilia communities build a bridge and jointly host a multi-city screening series of the new documentary film "Bad Blood: A Cautionary Tale"*

New York, NY (July 21, 2010) – "Bad Blood: A Cautionary Tale", directed by Marilyn Ness, a documentary ten years in the making, will premiere next week in New York City as the launch of a multi-city theatrical screening series co-hosted by a coalition of national gay rights and hemophilia advocacy groups including Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC), Committee of Ten Thousand (COTT), Hemophilia Federation of America (HFA), National Hemophilia Foundation (NHF), and World Federation of Hemophilia (WFH). The film documents the tragic history and facts surrounding the discovery of HIV in the U.S. blood supply in the early days of the AIDS epidemic. On the heels of the Health and Human Services (HHS) Blood Committee's vote last month to recommend research and review of the FDA's longstanding deferral of all men who have had sex with another man (MSM) from donating blood, the two communities invested in reform find common ground through the shared history featured in "Bad Blood".

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Earlier this year, 17 Congressmen led by Senator John Kerry (MA) approached the FDA to reconsider the deferral of MSM blood donors. As the Health and Human Services Blood Safety Committee convened to consider the recommendation, GMHC along with other AIDS Alliance members and the plasma-users coalition - organizations with a strong commitment to the safety of our nation's blood supply - issued a joint statement urging the FDA to recommend any scientific research that is necessary to allow for the thoughtful consideration of alternative policies regarding donor deferral.

Filmmaker Marilyn Ness explains, "Each of us owes the hemophilia community a debt of gratitude for their unintended and tragic role in alerting the country to the contamination of the U.S. blood supply with HIV and hepatitis from the 1970s through the 1990s. Since then, the bleeding disorders groups stand as guardians of the nation's blood supply and are now joined in their advocacy efforts by Gay Men's Health Crisis. I am tremendously gratified that 'Bad Blood' has united these two groups to work together toward blood safety and FDA reform on behalf of all Americans. I can think of no more fitting a memorial for those who were unnecessarily lost than to continue their work ensuring history will never again be repeated."

Through the eyes of survivors and family members, the documentary film "Bad Blood" chronicles how a miracle treatment for hemophilia became an agent of death for 10,000 Americans. Faced with evidence that pharmaceutical companies and government regulators knew the medicine was contaminated with deadly viruses, they launched a powerful and inspiring fight to right the system that failed them and to make it safer for all. The film brings together patients, doctors, drug manufacturers, and government regulators to recollect how the worst medical disaster of the 20th Century was allowed to occur and cautions us to remember, remain vigilant, and to demand a safer system. The hosts of this screening believe harnessing the devastating history chronicled in "Bad Blood" will inform the future of blood safety for every American.

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“The lessons learned from this tragic time should not be forgotten. Out of this tragedy and similar experiences worldwide, a new era of safe and effective treatment products emerged,” said Mark Skinner, President, World Federation of Hemophilia. “However, there is a continual need for worldwide vigilance to **prevent history from being repeated.**”

Marjorie Hill, CEO, Gay Men’s Health Crisis added, “as GMHC continues to advocate for revised blood donation guidelines for gay men, ‘Bad Blood’ reminds us of the **devastating history that informs the future of blood safety.**”

Both gay men and people with hemophilia have been disproportionately impacted by the HIV epidemic. In the early 1980s, as HIV breached the nation’s blood supply, nearly 90% of Americans with severe hemophilia, a rare bleeding disorder, became either infected or co-infected with HIV and hepatitis from contaminated blood-based medications; more than 50% have since died. Critical advancements in HIV prevention, treatment, and research can be linked directly to the years of successful advocacy by both the bleeding disorders and gay rights communities.

The DVD of “Bad Blood: A Cautionary Tale” will be on sale for educational and institutional use beginning July 29th, 2010 and to the public on **December 1, 2010** marking World AIDS Day.
For more information please visit www.BadBloodDocumentary.com.

About the Filmmaker

Marilyn Ness – Director/Producer/Writer – www.BadBloodDocumentary.com

Marilyn Ness is a two-time Emmy Award-winning documentary producer. She founded Necessary Films in 2005, directing short films for non-profits and developing documentaries including *BAD BLOOD* and *GENOME: The Future Is Now*. Prior to that, Ness spent four years as a producer for director Ric Burns, collaborating on four award-winning PBS films: *Ansel Adams; The Center of the World; Andy Warhol; and Eugene O’Neill*. Ness’s other credits include films for TLC, Court TV, and National Geographic, as well as films for the PBS series *American Experience* and the theatrical feature *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg*. She lives in New York City with her husband and two sons.

For more information please contact:

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About the Organizations

Committee of Ten Thousand (COTT) – www.COTT.com

COTT is a grass-roots, peer-led, education, advocacy and support organization for persons with HIV disease. The majority of their constituency is persons with hemophilia who contracted HIV/AIDS from tainted blood products. They work in solidarity with all communities affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. COTT advocates for disenfranchised chronic disease communities, especially those communities dependent on a safe national blood supply.

For more information please contact: Corey Dubin (805)-967-6679

Gay Men’s Health Crisis (GMHC) – www.GMHC.com

GMHC is a not-for-profit, volunteer-supported and community-based organization committed to national leadership in the fight against AIDS. We provide prevention and care services to men, women and families that are living with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS in New York City. We advocate for scientific, evidence-based public health solutions for hundreds of thousands worldwide. Our mission: GMHC fights to end the AIDS epidemic and uplift the lives of all affected.

For more information please contact: Krishna Stone (212) 367-1016 or krishnas@gmhc.org

Hemophilia Federation of America (HFA) – www.HemophiliaFed.org

HFA is a national 501(c) (3) organization consisting of 30 member organizations and numerous individual members who offer assistance and grassroots advocacy on behalf of the bleeding disorders community. Incorporated in 1994, the HFA provides programs and services to improve the quality of life for persons with hemophilia and von Willebrand disease (VWD). For more information, visit our website at www.hemophiliafed.org or call 1-800-230-9797.

For more information please contact: Kimberly Haugstad (202) 675-6984 or k.haugstad@hemophiliafed.org

National Hemophilia Foundation (NHF) – www.Hemophilia.org

NHF is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to finding better treatments and cures for bleeding and clotting disorders and to preventing the complications of these disorders through education, advocacy and research. Established in 1948, the National Hemophilia Foundation has 45 chapters throughout the country. Its programs and initiatives are made possible through the generosity of individuals, corporations and foundations as well as through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

For more information please contact: John Indence (212) 328-3763 or jindence@hemophilia.org

World Federation of Hemophilia (WFH) – www.WFH.org

WFH is an international not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of people with hemophilia and related other inherited bleeding disorders. Since it was established in 1963, the WFH has grown into a truly global network with member organizations in 118 countries and official recognition from the World Health Organization. It works in partnership with healthcare professionals and people with bleeding disorders, governments and regulators, industry and foundations, to improve care throughout the world.

For more information please contact: Sarah Ford (514) 394-2822 or sford@wfh.org

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FOR 10,000 AMERICANS
A MIRACLE TREATMENT BECAME
THEIR DEATH SENTENCE.

THE WORST
MEDICAL DISASTER
IN U.S. HISTORY

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A CAUTIONARY TALE A FILM BY MARILYN NESS

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