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Testimony on HIV Testing Over the Counter
March 10, 2006
Blood Products Advisory Committee Hearing

To all interested parties, my name is Dr. David Reznik and I serve as Chief of the Dental Service and Director of the Oral Health Center at the Infectious Disease Program of Grady Health Systems in Atlanta, Georgia. The purpose of this statement is to urge BPAC and the FDA to support the availability of an FDA-approved, rapid, oral fluid HIV screening test for over-the-counter use.

In an attempt to convey a bit more about my interest in supporting this issue, I am a member of Emory University's School of Medicine, Division of Infectious Disease faculty, founder of HIVdent, a non-profit committed to assuring access to high quality oral health care services for adults, adolescents and children living with HIV disease and the first dentist to be named a member of the core faculty of the International AIDS Society – USA. Through HIVdent I have had the honor of working with numerous organizations around the country providing technical assistance for the provision of comprehensive HIV care and treatment. I am here today representing the views of one of America's largest public health hospital systems, Grady Health System.

I am of the opinion that there is ample data available today to support the broader availability of the new rapid HIV screening test technology. This technology has been FDA approved since late 2002 and was granted a CLIA waiver by President Bush in 2003. Since then more people than ever are learning their HIV status and receiving prompt treatment as a result of this simple, highly accurate, rapid HIV test. For many residents of the United States that are unaware of their HIV status, providing access to this technology over-the-counter would remove some of the barriers to HIV testing. Studies have shown that many who test positive for HIV infection via today's standard of care do not return for their results. Studies have also shown that once a person is aware of their status, if positive, they are up to 70% less likely to engage in behaviors that will place themselves and others in jeopardy. Also, recently published research by

Dr. Michael Saag, et al in *Clinical Infectious Diseases* has documented that early entry in to care and treatment leads to better outcomes and is more cost effective.

As a dentist who began my professional career in the private sector in Atlanta, Georgia just as the HIV/AIDS epidemic was beginning to devastate people's lives, I am very aware of the negative effects of stigma and the psychological burden that can be associated with this disease. Therefore, I believe it to be in the best interests of those who utilize an OTC rapid HIV test to have access to a complete and effective response center. Key components that should be studied include a 24/7 telephone and Internet-based response system to answer any questions or concerns pre and post test. This system should also contain a centralized resource list of available public and private primary care providers, AIDS service organizations, and follow-up to appropriate confirmatory testing and care. Much of this information already exists, such as the American Academy of HIV Medicine list of providers, which can be accessed by zip code. Numerous states and territories have compiled a list of available HIV-related services that would be beneficial in case of a positive result.

I have provided treatment and care for people living with HIV/AIDS for over 20 years. I still witness a significant percentage of our new patients present with advanced HIV disease. I fully support any effort that will help our citizens learn their HIV status and enter into care at an appropriate time. I look forward to the day when HIV is no longer devastating our families, friends and loved ones. Learning one's status is the first step towards ending this epidemic.

I welcome the opportunity to assist you in this dialogue going forward and ask that a copy of my remarks be entered into the record.

Submitted by Dr. David A. Reznik
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