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Infectious Diseases Society of America

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The Secretary of the Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines
Medicine Access and Rational Use (MAR)
Department of Essential Medicines and Health Products (EMP)
Health Systems and Services (HSS)
World Health Organization
20 Avenue Appia
CH-1211 Geneva 27

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) represents nearly 10,000 infectious diseases physicians and scientists devoted to patient care, prevention, public health, education, and research in the area of infectious diseases (ID). The Society's members focus on the epidemiology, diagnosis, investigation, prevention and treatment of infectious diseases globally. Our members care for patients of all ages with serious infections, including meningitis, pneumonia, tuberculosis, surgical infections, those with cancer or transplants who have life-threatening infections caused by unusual or drug-resistant microorganisms, people living with HIV, AIDS, chronic viral hepatitis, and new and emerging infections, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and H1N1 influenza. We are writing to affirm our strong support for the inclusion of pegylated interferon (PEG-IFN) on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines.

As you may be aware, an estimated 170 million persons are infected with hepatitis C virus (HCV) worldwide and HCV infection is one of the leading causes of liver failure and hepatocellular carcinoma. There is clear evidence that cure of HCV infection is possible and dramatically reduces the risks of liver failure and hepatocellular carcinoma. Peginterferon alfa is the cornerstone of treatment and for many patients with a virus of the appropriate genotype, it is a reliable, essential treatment. Moreover, we believe that the inclusion of PEG-IFN on the WHO List will promote broader awareness of HCV and critical recognition of the importance of early diagnosis and timely appropriate care.

As an organization dedicated to the prevention and treatment of global infectious diseases, we thank you for considering our support.

Respectfully,

David Relman, M.D. F.I.D.S.A.
President, IDSA