



NEWS RELEASE

R&B Legend Natalie Cole Joins Rock Legend Gregg Allman, Merck and The American Liver Foundation to Turn Up the Volume Around Hep C

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Cole to Perform with The Allman Brothers Band at the Tune In to Hep C Benefit Concert Tomorrow on the Eve of World Hepatitis Day

Merck (NYSE: MRK) (known as MSD outside the United States and Canada) today announced that GRAMMY® winner Natalie Cole is adding her voice to the company's public health campaign, Tune In to Hep C, with the American Liver Foundation (ALF) and rock legend Gregg Allman. The goal of the campaign is to raise awareness of chronic hepatitis C virus infection. Cole will join Allman onstage at a benefit concert featuring The Allman Brothers Band and other special guests in New York tomorrow, July 27, the eve of World Hepatitis Day.

This cause is personal to Cole, who was diagnosed with chronic hepatitis C during a routine blood test in 2008. It was then that she realized she'd been living with the virus for more than 25 years - nearly half of her life. Cole's experience is not uncommon. In fact, chronic hepatitis C is often referred to as the silent disease because – for many people – it can be in the body for decades without any symptoms. Cole is joining the campaign to encourage others with chronic hepatitis C to put aside fear and stigma and take action.

"One thing is for sure – there's a stigma surrounding hepatitis C because it's associated with IV drug use. But it really doesn't matter how you got the virus. What's important is that you do something about it," said Cole. "I am grateful that Merck and the American Liver Foundation created this campaign to give a voice to those with chronic hepatitis C, and I hope that my story can help others overcome their fears about taking that next step by talking to their doctor about their options."

Approximately 3.2 million Americans have chronic hepatitis C virus infection, a potentially serious disease that can damage the liver over time and lead to cirrhosis, end-stage liver disease and liver cancer. Many people infected with chronic hepatitis C do not know that they have the virus – approximately 70 to 80 percent of people newly infected with the virus do not have symptoms.

"It's great to have Natalie on board to help spread the message that chronic hepatitis C is not something you can ignore," Allman said. "Together, we'll be working to fight the stigma that can keep people from addressing this disease. I know all too well that doing nothing is not an option. That's why we're telling people, talk to your doctor."

The American Liver Foundation joined the Tune In to Hep C campaign to help elevate awareness of this important public health issue. ALF is a national organization advocating for those living with liver disease and their families, and provides education, support and research for the prevention, treatment and cure of liver disease.

"Since we launched this campaign a month ago, we've been inundated with messages from people with chronic hepatitis C and their loved ones who all say the same thing – 'I never thought we'd see the day where there would be a voice and a face to this disease. It's about time,'" said Newton Guerin, acting CEO and chief operating officer, ALF. "By sharing their stories, Gregg and Natalie are sending a powerful message to those who feel alone and afraid to come forward as well as anyone who is hesitant to take action."

More information about the campaign as well as Allman's and Cole's stories are available on www.TuneInToHepC.com, which launched today. The website also offers a first glimpse at Allman's new television public service announcement, which is slated to hit the airwaves in the coming weeks.

"It is our hope that this campaign, and Gregg's and Natalie's inspirational stories, will serve as a spark to encourage dialogue about chronic hepatitis C among communities, families and friends, as well as between physicians and their patients," said Mark Timney, president, Global Human Health - U.S. Market, Merck. "From the feedback we've received so far, we believe the campaign is already making a difference, and we look forward to continuing to reach others with chronic hepatitis C, and, hopefully, motivating them to take action."

About the Benefit Concert

The concert, Tune In to Hep C Presents The Allman Brothers Band, will take place at The Beacon Theatre in New York City tomorrow, July 27, the eve of World Hepatitis Day. Allman and Cole will both perform at the concert, along with The Allman Brothers Band and other special guests. Proceeds from the benefit concert will be donated to the American Liver Foundation and to the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable, a coalition of public, private and voluntary organizations dedicated to reducing the incidence of infection, morbidity and mortality from viral

hepatitis in the United States.

About Gregg Allman

Allman is a legendary performer who is both a founding member of The Allman Brothers Band and a critically acclaimed solo artist. He has several gold records to his credit and his distinctive voice placed him on the Rolling Stone list of the "100 Greatest Singers of All Time." More than 40 years down the road, Allman still loves making and performing music as much as ever.

In addition to his singing and playing, Allman wrote many of The Allman Brothers Band's most memorable signature hits, including the classics "Whipping Post" and "Dreams" from their self-titled debut album, "Midnight Rider" and "Please Call Home" from their second album "Idlewild South," and "Melissa" from 1972's classic "Eat A Peach" album. The Allman Brothers Band went on to become the principal architects of Southern rock and were inducted into the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame in 1995. Allman's latest solo album "Low Country Blues" was released in 2011, debuting at No. 5 on the Billboard Top 200, the highest chart position of his solo career, and continues to gain critical acclaim and commercial success.

About Natalie Cole

Singer, songwriter and performer Natalie Cole has proven to be one of the most beloved performers of all time with nine GRAMMY awards. She rocketed to stardom in 1975 with her debut album, "Inseparable," earning her a No. 1 single, "This Will Be (An Everlasting Love)," and two GRAMMY awards for Best New Artist, as well as Best Female R&B Vocal Performance. More hit singles followed, and, in 1987, she released "Dangerous," which sold over two million copies in the U.S. and garnered her three hit singles.

In 1991, Natalie Cole took a bold leap that would change her life and career forever. Already a highly successful R&B artist, she recorded "Unforgettable...With Love," an album of standards from the American Songbook that included a virtual duet with her late father – Nat King Cole – on the title track. The album spent five weeks at No. 1 on the pop charts, earned six GRAMMY awards and sold more than 14 million copies worldwide.

Cole's latest album, "Still Unforgettable," was released in September 2008 garnering her two more GRAMMY awards for Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album and Best Instrumental Accompanying Vocalist. It also earned Cole a NAACP Award for Best Jazz Artist. While recording the album, Cole was diagnosed with chronic hepatitis C during a routine examination. The infection likely resulted from IV drug use many decades ago, which she documented in her autobiography, *Angel On My Shoulder* (2000).

About The American Liver Foundation

The American Liver Foundation (ALF) is a national nonprofit organization promoting liver health and disease prevention. ALF provides research, education and advocacy for those affected by liver-related diseases, including hepatitis. For more information, visit www.liverfoundation.org.

About Merck

Today's Merck is a global healthcare leader working to help the world be well. Merck is known as MSD outside the United States and Canada. Through our prescription medicines, vaccines, biologic therapies, and consumer care 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 healthcare through far-reaching policies, programs and partnerships. For more information, visit www.Merck.com.

Forward-Looking Statement

This news release includes "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the safe harbor provisions of the United States Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Such statements may include, but are not limited to, statements about the benefits of the merger between Merck and Schering-Plough, including future financial and operating results, the combined company's plans, objectives, expectations and intentions and other statements that are not historical facts. Such statements are based upon the current beliefs and expectations of Merck's management and are subject to significant risks and uncertainties. Actual results may differ from those set forth in the forward-looking statements.

The following factors, among others, could cause actual results to differ from those set forth in the forward-looking statements: the possibility that the expected synergies from the merger of Merck and Schering-Plough will not be realized, or will not be realized within the expected time period; the impact of pharmaceutical industry regulation and health care legislation; the risk that the businesses will not be integrated successfully; disruption from the merger making it more difficult to maintain business and operational relationships; Merck's ability to accurately predict future market conditions; dependence on the effectiveness of Merck's patents and other protections for innovative products; the risk of new and changing regulation and health policies in the United States and internationally and the exposure to litigation and/or regulatory actions.

Merck 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 Merck's 2010 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).