

MEDIA ALERT

Chagas Disease: Break the Silence—Time to Treat

Medical, Scientific Experts Gather in Los Angeles to Shed Light on Deadly Latin American Disease Now Increasingly Found in the U.S.

WHAT:

Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières and the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative will host a series of events on Chagas, a little-known killer disease threatening millions of people in Latin America and increasingly diagnosed in Los Angeles and cities throughout the U.S. **Los Angeles County, home to the nation's only Chagas treatment center and a large at-risk population, is the US focal point for Chagas disease.**

- **Public evening panel discussion to raise awareness of Chagas**
- **Scientific/medical symposium to highlight urgent need for better diagnosis and treatment**

WHEN & WHERE:

Free Public Event: Expert Panel Discussion, THURSDAY, OCT. 1 at 7:30 p.m.

"Chagas Disease: Break the Silence—Time to Treat"

The Broad Stage, 1310 11th Street, Santa Monica

Scientific/Medical Symposium, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2 at 9 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

"Chagas Disease in the Americas: Improving Access and Tools for Patient Diagnosis and Treatment," co-sponsored by UCLA Program for Global Health

University of California, Los Angeles

Faculty Center, California Room

480 Charles Young Drive East, Los Angeles

WHY:

Chagas is one of the world's most neglected diseases, yet it infects between 10 and 15 million people in Latin America every year. In the U.S. there are an estimated 300,000 people living with Chagas and new infections continue to be detected since blood screening for the disease began in 2007.

Chagas can lead to heart failure and death, but access to treatment is extremely limited. Existing drugs are antiquated and accompanied by severe side effects. Doctors Without Borders and the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative are calling for increased diagnosis, access to treatment, and more research to develop better, less toxic medicines.

WHO: Speakers include:

--Maira Gutierrez, patient living with Chagas in Los Angeles

--Dr. Sheba Meymandi, director, Center for Excellence for Chagas Disease, UCLA-Olive View Medical Center

--Tom Ellman—head of mission, Doctors Without Borders, Bolivia Chagas program

--Dr. Bernard Pecoul— executive director, Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative

--Representatives from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Red Cross, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Pan American Health Organization.

******NOTE TO TELEVISION REPORTERS/PRODUCERS: B-ROLL IS
AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST*****

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