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STATEMENT OF MARIAN DIX LEMLE
REGARDING RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CFS/ME RESEARCH

I have prepared this statement to respond to inquiries I have received for comments regarding recent CFS/ME research developments.

I conceived the idea for my work on hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) and chronic fatigue in November 2006 while attending a lecture at the White House Fellows Association Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., where a scientist described his experiments with hydrogen sulfide gas and induced hibernation. I was struck by the parallels between the enervated, torpor-like state of people with chronic fatigue and that of the hibernating mice. Thus began this journey.

I was the first to propose a possible relationship of hydrogen sulfide to chronic fatigue in an extensive paper I wrote in 2007 titled "Hypothesis: Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Mitochondrial Hypofunction and Hydrogen Sulfide". That paper circulated within the United States and made its way around the world. A much abbreviated and condensed version of that paper was then e-published ahead of print in August 2008 by the Journal of Medical Hypotheses under the title "Hypothesis: Chronic fatigue syndrome is caused by dysregulation of hydrogen sulfide metabolism". It is my view that the research paradigm that Dr. De Meirleir described at the Invest in ME Research Conference (London, May 29, 2009), was based on my original work and provided the conceptual framework and research leads by which he could identify, in his words, the "true nature of the disorder." Indeed, Dr. De Meirleir wrote to me that his clinical studies had confirmed my hypothesis.

In addition to writing these papers, I also have worked to bring the concept to the attention of federal officials in testimony before the Chronic Fatigue Advisory Committee (CFSAC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in November of 2008 and in discussions with researchers at the National Institutes of Health. I also presented a poster on this topic at the IACFS/ME conference in Reno, Nevada, in March 2009.

Although many doctors have been aware of my theory, the fact is that Dr. De Meirleir pursued the idea and for that I am grateful. However, serious questions about the reliability of his data and his methodology were raised by the participants at the Invest in ME Research Conference in London on May 29, 2009. Dr. De Meirleir stated that he would be presenting data in support of his research at a conference two weeks hence and that his results were being independently verified, but he identified neither the venue nor the confirming party.

I am gratified that Dr. De Meirleir's findings appears to have confirmed my hypothesis. It now is important to follow standard verification procedures that are designed to protect vulnerable patients from spending money on tests and treatments whose reliability, effectiveness and safety have not been proven. It is also important that other investigators confirm his findings (e.g., abnormally high levels of Streptococcus, Enterococcus, Prevotella, lipopolysaccharides and aberrant proteins) in CFS patients elsewhere. The history of this crippling illness is fraught with new ideas and hopeful treatments that prove unsuccessful, and end up once again dashing the hopes of desperate victims.

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