



## ***Tune In to Hep C*** **Campaign Backgrounder**

*Tune In to Hep C* is a national public health campaign created to educate people about chronic hepatitis C and the importance of taking action. The campaign was founded because – although chronic hepatitis C care is advancing – public understanding of the disease isn't moving at nearly the same pace.

Nearly 3.2 million Americans have chronic hepatitis C virus infection, a potentially serious disease that can damage the liver over time. Of those, an estimated one million are Hispanic-Americans. Chronic hepatitis C is the leading cause of cirrhosis (scarring of the liver) and may lead to end-stage liver disease and liver cancer. Many people infected with chronic hepatitis C do not know they have the disease – approximately 70 to 80 percent of people newly infected with the virus do not have symptoms

Merck has joined forces with the American Liver Foundation and GRAMMY® winners Gregg Allman, Natalie Cole and Jon Secada to turn up the volume on chronic hepatitis C by educating patients about the virus and encouraging them to take the next step.

Their own personal experiences with chronic hepatitis C inspire them to share their stories and help others. Allman was diagnosed with chronic hepatitis C in 1999, Cole was diagnosed in 2008, and Secada lost his father to complications associated with the disease in 2011. Together, they hope to motivate others to tell their friends and family about their diagnosis and to talk to their health care provider about their options. Their message is clear: Doing nothing is not an option.

This partnership with Allman, Cole, Secada and the American Liver Foundation is part of Merck's *Hope Against Hepatitis C* initiative, which is committed to supporting the hepatitis C community through a variety of public-private partnerships that will involve public education, patients support programs and collaborative research efforts.

Visit [www.TuneInToHepC.com](http://www.TuneInToHepC.com) to learn more.

