



News Release

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**Fashion Designer and *Project Runway All Stars* Winner Mondo Guerra
Collaborates with Merck to Help Empower People with HIV to Work with Their
Doctors to "Tailor" Their Treatment Plan**

***National HIV education campaign underscores need for good physician-patient
communication***

WHITEHOUSE STATION, N.J., JULY 17, 2012 – Merck (NYSE: MRK), known as MSD outside the United States and Canada, today announced that Mondo Guerra, fashion designer and winner of the hit television show *Project Runway All Stars*, is using his professional and personal experiences to help empower people living with HIV to work with their doctors to take a "tailored" approach to their treatment plan. Prompted by Mondo's artistic self-expression and his personal story, *I Design* encourages meaningful and open physician-patient dialogue that takes into account a person's medical and lifestyle needs.

"I have been living with HIV for more than 10 years and know how crucial it is to find a treatment approach that's tailored to you," said Mondo Guerra. "As a designer, self-expression has always been very important to me, but being prepared to have a conversation with my doctor about my needs has been challenging. That is why I am excited to collaborate with Merck on *I Design*, encouraging people living with HIV to have an open dialogue with their doctors and be active participants in their approach to managing their HIV."

According to the recently revised U.S. Department of Health and Human Services guidelines on HIV-1 treatment, for people living with HIV, individualizing treatment with involvement from both the patient and physician in the decision making "is the cornerstone of any treatment plan."

As part of the campaign, Mondo will travel the U.S. in 2012 to raise awareness about *I Design* through local events, as well as meetings with AIDS service organizations, to discuss his experience living with the disease and how actively communicating with your doctor can have a meaningful influence on your treatment plan. Mondo will be conducting activities in Washington, D.C. during the International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2012) and at the United States Conference on AIDS (USCA 2012) in Las Vegas later this year.

“Merck has a longstanding commitment to improving access to HIV treatment and care in the United States,” said Mark Timney, president, Global Human Health – U.S. Market, Merck. “We continue our commitment by supporting *I Design* and collaborating with Mondo to share his personal experience living with HIV to inspire patients to talk with their doctors about their treatment plan. We are grateful to Mondo for his commitment to help motivate people with HIV to find their voice.”

Getting Involved with Mondo and *I Design*

Mondo is encouraging people living with HIV to get involved in the campaign by visiting www.ProjectIDesign.com, where they can design a digital textile representing their "tailored" approach to working with their doctor, and share it with friends and family via their personal social media channels. Through the creative design process, people living with HIV will receive tips to help facilitate that open dialogue with their doctors. Some of the key questions to consider when talking with your doctor are:

- Important goals of treatment, including achieving and maintaining an undetectable viral load and increasing CD4 cell counts
- Potential side effects from all your medications
- Additional health concerns, such as managing cholesterol levels and other health issues

A gallery of all the digital *I Design* textiles, including Mondo's personal design, will be available on the website, creating a mosaic of approaches representative of the HIV Community. Downloadable resources, such as a checklist, will also be available to help guide conversations with a doctor about managing HIV.

About *I Design*

I Design is a national HIV education campaign led by Merck and fashion designer Mondo Guerra aimed at helping to empower people living with HIV to have open and meaningful discussions with their doctors about their treatment plan based on their medical and lifestyle

needs. To design a digital textile illustrating your approach to managing HIV, and to learn more about the campaign, please visit www.ProjectDesign.com. For additional tips and to follow Merck and Mondo's collaboration with *I Design*, join Merck and Mondo on Twitter @Merck and @LoveMondoTrasho.

More about Mondo

After an emotional disclosure of his HIV-positive status during Season 8, fashion designer Mondo Guerra won the hearts of the judges, fellow contestants and viewers on the hit reality TV show *Project Runway*. This spring marked his triumphant return to *Project Runway All Stars* as the winner of the show.

Mondo has been HIV-positive for more than 10 years, and since his courageous disclosure, has become an advocate for HIV awareness. He is currently collaborating with Merck on *I Design*, a national HIV education campaign to help empower people with HIV to play an active role in working with their doctors to design an HIV treatment plan. Mondo continues to serve as a role model in the HIV Community by speaking openly about his status and encouraging others to do the same.

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 and connect with us on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

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