



News Release

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Mondo Guerra of *Project Runway All Stars* Hosts Interactive Community Art Project at One of the Largest Annual HIV Gatherings in the United States

Recently Launched HIV Education Campaign, *I Design*, Helps Foster Patient-Physician Communication

LAS VEGAS, N.V., September 28, 2012 – Merck (NYSE: MRK), known as MSD outside the United States and Canada, announced today that fashion designer and *Project Runway All Stars* winner, Mondo Guerra, is bringing the national HIV education campaign *I Design* to Las Vegas this week to participate in the 2012 United States Conference on AIDS (USCA).

During USCA, Mondo will be on-site to meet attendees and talk about his work with *I Design*. Further, attendees are being invited to join Mondo in the creation of a community mural each day during the three-day exhibit hall at USCA to motivate the community to help improve patient-physician communications, much like creating a textile on the *I Design* website.

Participants working on the mural will “lay the foundation,” “personalize” their design, and add “finishing touches” to the mural, while learning key tips on how to engage in an open and honest dialogue with their doctor. Mondo is also encouraging people who are unable to attend USCA to participate in the design activity online at www.ProjectIDesign.com, where they can create a digital textile representing their "tailored" approach. Several digital textiles have already been designed by visitors to the website and are currently featured in the design gallery. This mural will further serve as inspiration for a Mondo-designed fashion piece to be unveiled on World AIDS Day.

“I am honored to bring *I Design* to the thousands of community leaders and advocates who will be attending USCA this year, and am eager to convey the importance of meaningful

patient-physician discussions through the creation of a community mural,” said Guerra. “As a fashion designer, I understand the personal benefit of artistic self-expression, and I also know how important it is to find a treatment plan that works for you. *I Design* encourages an open dialogue so people living with HIV can become active participants in their approach to managing their HIV.”

USCA is organized by the National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC), an organization that represents a coalition of 3,000 faith- and community-based organizations and AIDS service organizations (ASOs) nationwide. This year, the conference runs from September 30 to October 3 and will be held at Caesars Palace Hotel in Las Vegas. USCA is one of several stops for the *I Design* campaign, which was originally launched earlier this year in New York City, and also had a presence at the XIX International AIDS Conference (IAC) in Washington, D.C. As part of the *I Design* campaign, Mondo was in Los Angeles earlier this month for a local HIV community event and is slated to participate in upcoming local ASO events this year. *I Design* encourages people living with HIV to have meaningful and open discussions with their doctor that take into account their unique medical and lifestyle needs.

“Engaging in open communication between patients and physicians is important because everyone living with HIV is different, and their treatment plans should reflect that,” said Michael Gottlieb, MD, a leading HIV physician who authored the first CDC report on HIV in 1981. “According to the newest HIV-1 treatment guidelines from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, individualizing HIV treatment with involvement from both the patient and physician in the decision making ‘is the cornerstone of any treatment plan’.”

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.ProjectIDesign.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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