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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **"LET'S TALK SEX," SAYS GMFA**

#### ***New booklet from GMFA encourages gay men to protect themselves and their partners***

LONDON, 13 January 2010 – Most gay men use condoms for fucking most of the time. However, when having sex with men they believe to have the same HIV status as them, some men don't. Many gay men become infected with HIV in this way, which is why GMFA, the gay men's health charity, is launching its new booklet, "Let's Talk Sex". The booklet provides information and advice on keeping the sex you have safe and fun, whether it is with casual partners, fuck buddies or a long-term boyfriend.

'Let's Talk Sex' is aimed at both HIV-negative and HIV-positive gay men. It includes information and advice on avoiding risks with casual partners and fuck buddies, coming up with a plan to stay safe in relationships and talking openly about safer sex with your partners.

Matthew Hodson, Head of Programmes at GMFA, says: "There is still no cure for HIV. Fucking without condoms with someone because you think they have the same HIV status as you may seem safe, but this is how most gay men become infected. It's easy to make the wrong assumption about a guy you meet in a bar, sauna or online - and it's just as easy to put you and your partner at risk if you are in a monogamous relationship. 'Let's Talk Sex' gives

practical advice and information for all gay men, whether they are positive or negative, in a relationship or having casual sex.”

Roughly a third of gay men infected with HIV thought that it happened while having sex with a regular partner. This is often due to couples abandoning condoms without being certain that both partners are HIV-negative. Even if both guys are HIV-positive, there are still risks to think about, such as contracting hepatitis C or a different strain of HIV.

Matthew adds: “The ability to talk openly and honestly with our partners is a vital tool in keeping sex safe. Couples may have had sex without condoms on the spur of the moment, without really planning for it. If this happens, we want to encourage men to stop and think about their behaviour, and to discuss with their partners how they can best protect each other.”

The booklet includes advice for HIV-negative and HIV-positive men on how to stay safe with casual partners. About three quarters of gay men expect HIV-positive men to disclose their status before sex. However, only one in five HIV-positive gay men always tell their casual partners that they have HIV. If a guy you have sex with doesn't mention his HIV status, it doesn't mean he has the same HIV status as you. It just means he's chosen not to talk about it.

The “Let's Talk Sex” booklet is available for free in bars, clubs and other gay venues across London. It is also available to download from the GMFA website at [www.gmfa.org.uk/talksex](http://www.gmfa.org.uk/talksex).

Matthew adds: “Fucking without condoms is the most common way that HIV is transmitted. Whether you are in a loving long-term relationship or have sex with casual partners, using condoms or not fucking remain the most reliable ways to prevent the spread of HIV.”

- ENDS -

### **About GMFA**

Founded in 1992, GMFA is the UK's leading charity dedicated to gay men's health. Its mission is to improve gay men's health by increasing the control they have over their own lives. The organisation is based on the belief that the best health promotion for gay men comes from gay men themselves. For this reason, it uses the knowledge and ideas of its 170 volunteers, most of them gay men, to design and plan its thought-provoking sexual health interventions. These include a range of advertising campaigns, leaflets, postcards and booklets; FS, its health magazine, distributed nationally in gay venues and GU clinics; and national and London-based courses covering sex education, life skills and smoking cessation. In addition, GMFA creates targeted sexual health interventions for black gay men and HIV positive gay men. Independent surveys have concluded that GMFA's campaigns reach up to 60% of the London gay population and that the organisation is the most reliable agency at reaching gay men. The charity runs a range of information websites:

- Sex & Sexual Health, [www.gmfa.org.uk/sex](http://www.gmfa.org.uk/sex) - visited by a third of London's gay men in 2006;
- London Services, [www.gmfa.org.uk/londonservices](http://www.gmfa.org.uk/londonservices) - detailed listing of sexual health services for gay men in London;
- Positive Gay Guide, [www.gmfa.org.uk/positive](http://www.gmfa.org.uk/positive) - information for HIV positive gay men;
- The Guide, [www.gmfa.org.uk/theguide](http://www.gmfa.org.uk/theguide) - a guide to gay sports and social groups in London;
- Quit smoking, [www.gmfa.org.uk/quitsmoking](http://www.gmfa.org.uk/quitsmoking) - information and advice on quitting smoking for gay men;
- About GMFA, [www.gmfa.org.uk/aboutgmfa](http://www.gmfa.org.uk/aboutgmfa) - for more information on GMFA.

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