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EDDIE MAIR:

A national campaign has been launched in Edinburgh to win compensation for the one hundred and fifty people who have contracted the HIV virus through blood transfusions. The Scottish lawyer acting for five sufferers here met with two English colleagues to establish a UK-wide pressure group. Brenda Paterson reports.

BRENDA PATERSON:

A hundred and fifty people throughout Britain have contracted the HIV virus through contaminated blood transfusions given before 1986. Twelve of those are in Scotland. Last December, the Government agreed on a fifty million pound compensation package for sufferers of the blood condition, haemophilia, who contracted HIV through contaminated blood products. Brian Donald represents five Scottish victims of contaminated transfusions who want a similar deal.

BRIAN DONALD, SCOTTISH VICTIMS' LAWYER:

Say that there is a man in his middle twenties who had a life threatening disease, namely leukaemia, from which he recovered and, at the time, part of his treatment involved blood transfusions and, as a result of that, he now has AIDS, or he is HIV positive. There is a little boy who is five who received blood transfusions at birth and he now has HIV positive status and possibly AIDS.

BRENDA PATERSON:

Brian Donald today met two English lawyers, Graham Ross and Tony Mallen. They are now joining forces to mount a campaign aimed at MPs and pressure groups in the hope that the Government will extend the compensation deal. They are also taking their fight to the courts but worry a long legal battle may mean settlements come too late for some of those they represent.

Their campaign was lent support today by one young haemophiliac who has received over twenty-three thousand pounds in compensation for contracting the virus through a blood product.

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NICHOLAS MEDLEY:

Even if you remain well, as I am fortunately at the moment, you do not know how long you are going to stay well, whether you will still be around in two years or twenty years, or develop some symptoms of HIV or AIDS next week. That alone - the mental trauma - is pretty devastating, without any of the physical symptoms.

BRENDA PATERSON:

The Scottish Blood Transfusion Service says processing has been constantly reviewed since 1986 and every donation undergoes extensive testing for maximum safety. Sadly, that is of little comfort to those already infected.

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