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Advancing the battle against Human Growth Hormone

On December 13 2007, former Senator George J. Mitchell delivered a report to Commissioner Allan H. Selig on the use of performance-enhancing substances in Major League Baseball. Senator Mitchell concluded that Major League Baseball's drug policy 'has been effective in that detectable steroid use appears to have declined.'^[1] At the same time, however, Senator Mitchell cautioned that 'the use of human growth hormone has risen because, unlike steroids, it is not detectable through urine testing.'^[1]

Even in the absence of a viable urine test, Commissioner Selig, in response to Senator Mitchell's report, took immediate steps to deal with the challenges posed by human growth hormone (hGH). He created a separate Department of Investigations within the Commissioner's Office to focus on 'non-analytical positives,' the only viable alternative for proving that players have used hGH in violation of Major League Baseball's policy. Since the Mitchell Report, players have been disciplined for the use of hGH based on the efforts of the Department of Investigations, and Major League Baseball has been praised for its ability to prove non-analytical positives.^[2,3]

Commissioner Selig recognized, however, that the long-term solutions to the problems posed by human growth hormone have to be found through research and education. Investigation techniques alone are not enough. Advances in testing for human growth hormone must be made. At a press conference held on the day of the release of the Mitchell Report, Commissioner Selig announced Major League Baseball's intention to sponsor a symposium on human growth hormone and the related testing

issues. The Human Growth Hormone Summit is the culmination of the effort announced by the Commissioner at that press conference.

Major League Baseball is proud of the quality of the program hosted by the David Gellen School of Medicine at UCLA. We also remain hopeful that the information contained in this volume will advance the battle against the use of performance-enhancing substances generally and hGH in particular. Equally important, we hope that the Human Growth Hormone Summit becomes a model for collaborative effort within the anti-drug community to deal with new challenges raised by performance enhancing substances.

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References

- [1] *Report to the Commissioner of Baseball of an Independent Investigation into the Illegal Use of Steroids and Other Performance Enhancing Substances by Players in Major League Baseball* (the 'Mitchell Report'), p. SR-1.
- [2] Jordan Schafer, baseball's Minor League golden boy on HGH, *New York Daily News*, 11 April 2008.
- [3] MLB's new unit probing player ID theft as well as drug use, *USA Today*, 29 April 2008.