



Joint Statement on ACBTSA Recommendation to Change MSM Deferral Policy

November 2014

AABB, America's Blood Centers and the American Red Cross issued the following statement regarding the Department of Health and Human Services Advisory Committee on Blood and Tissue Safety and Availability recommendation on deferral criteria for Men Who Have had Sex with Men (MSM):

The top priorities of the blood banking community are the safety of our volunteer blood donors and the ultimate recipients of blood. As one measure to promote blood safety, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) sets minimum blood donation eligibility criteria in the United States.

AABB, America's Blood Centers and the American Red Cross support the recommendation that the FDA amend the current indefinite deferral of MSM to a 12-month deferral. This change in policy would align the donor deferral period for MSM with criteria for other activities that may pose a similar risk of transfusion-transmissible infections.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Advisory Committee on Blood and Tissue Safety and Availability recommendation to change the current deferral criteria for prospective male blood donors who have had sexual contact with another male (MSM) is consistent with our joint position. We believe the current FDA indefinite blood donation deferral for a man who has sex with another man since 1977 is medically and scientifically unwarranted. The blood banking community strongly supports the use of rational, scientifically-based deferral periods that are applied fairly and consistently among blood donors who engage in similar risk activities.

Our organizations also support the advisory committee's recommendations for sustainable monitoring of changes in blood safety following implementation of a new deferral policy.

We believe all potential donors should be treated with fairness, equality and respect, and that accurate donor histories and medically supported donor deferral criteria are critical to the continued safety of blood transfusion.