



Blood Bank of Alaska
Helping Alaska patients in need

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FDA Announces Change to Current MSM Deferral Policy

Blood Bank of Alaska is solely focused on fulfilling its mission to provide high quality blood products and related laboratory services while meeting changing healthcare needs. Our organization is regulated by the FDA to ensure that all blood products we produce align with the safety guidelines the FDA determines via scientific studies. In a statement released by the FDA on December 23, 2014, it was announced that an adjustment to their previous mandates regarding the men having sex with men (MSM) deferral will be implemented in 2015. This adjustment shifts the current lifetime ban for men that have had sex with men to a deferral of one year since the last sexual contact.

FDA Statement

Over the past several years, in collaboration with other government agencies, the FDA has carefully examined and considered the available scientific evidence relevant to its blood donor deferral policy for men who have sex with men, including the results of several recently completed scientific studies and recent epidemiologic data. Following this review, and taking into account the recommendations of advisory committees to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the FDA, the agency will take the necessary steps to recommend a change to the blood donor deferral period for men who have sex with men from indefinite deferral to one year since the last sexual contact.

This recommended change is consistent with the recommendation of an independent expert advisory panel the HHS Advisory Committee on Blood and Tissue Safety and Availability, and will better align the deferral period with that of other men and women at increased risk for HIV infection. Additionally, in collaboration with the NIH's National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), the FDA has already taken steps to implement a national blood surveillance system that will help the agency monitor the effect of a policy change and further help to ensure the continued safety of the blood supply.

(Full statement available at <http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm427843.htm>)

Blood Bank of Alaska's Position

Blood Bank of Alaska's number one goal is adherence to Federal Law and to maximize the availability of a safe blood supply for patients in need throughout the state of Alaska. Blood Bank of Alaska's number one mandate is ensuring the safety, purity and potency of the blood supply and its availability to medical facilities across the State of Alaska. We will continue to appraise FDA findings as they evaluate various deferral recommendations through their scientific process.

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BLOOD BANK OF ALASKA

Blood Bank of Alaska supplies blood to 21 Alaska hospitals and medical centers. Blood Bank of Alaska and its donors are dedicated to serving the Alaska community by providing high quality blood products and related laboratory services while meeting changing healthcare needs. Learn more at www.bloodbankofalaska.org.