



Canadian Hemophilia Society
Help Stop the Bleeding

December 4, 2018

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The Honourable Ginette Petitpas-Taylor, PC, MP
Minister of Health of Canada
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Dear Minister,

I am writing to provide you with the position of the Canadian Hemophilia Society, adopted by its Board of Directors on November 25, 2018, concerning the proposal by Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec to reduce the blood donation deferral for men who have had sex with men (MSM) from 12 to three months.

Given the data presented by Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec that a reduction in the MSM (men who have had sex with men) deferral from 12 months to three months would represent no increase in risk to recipients;

Given that CHS supports donor deferrals that are the least discriminatory possible while maintaining safety for recipients;

The Canadian Hemophilia Society supports a reduction in the MSM donor deferral from 12 to three months.

The Canadian Hemophilia Society has previously supported reductions in the time-based deferral, first from indefinite to five years, and then from five years to one year.

Our Blood Safety and Supply Committee continues to monitor the epidemiology of transfusion-transmitted infections in Canada and around the world. It is our current position that a time-based deferral, albeit a reasonably short one, for MSM and other higher risk activities is absolutely essential to the safety of fresh blood components. Furthermore, we believe that there is no solid research at this time that would justify the introduction of a so-called "gender-neutral" blood donor questionnaire and maintain the level of blood safety this country has worked so hard to attain.

Until such time that research shows that an alternative to a time-based exclusion poses no additional risk to recipients, the CHS will continue to support maintenance of a time-based deferral for MSM and other higher risk activities.

Thank you for considering the patient perspective on this important issue.

Sincerely,
Paul Wilton
President, Canadian Hemophilia Society

CC: Simon Kennedy, Deputy Minister, Health Canada: Simon.kennedy@canada.ca
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