

December 9, 2018

The Honourable Ginette Petitpas-Taylor, PC, MP
Minister of Health of Canada
70 Colombine Driveway
Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0K9
Hon.Ginette.Petitpas-Taylor@Canada.ca

Dear Ginette Petitpas-Taylor:

RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR NEW DEFERRAL PERIOD FOR THE CANADIAN BLOOD SERVICES MSM POLICY

Once again I am writing to ask you to support Canadian Blood Services (CBS) in their efforts to amend the deferral period for men who have sex with men (MSM) individuals wishing to donate blood from 12-months to 3-months. I view this change in deferral periods as a positive step for the gender, sexual, and relationship diverse (GSRD) community for a more inclusive blood supply system.

I have been working with Canadian Blood Services on the MSM policy issue since 2008. During that time I have attended multiple consultations with stakeholders and CBS representatives. I have participated in joint presentations with CBS and reported to their Board of Directors at their annual AGM. I am well versed on the MSM issue and consider a 3-month deferral to be the best option at this time for the GSRD community and Canadians in need of blood.

The 3-month deferral period is an additional step forward in the removal of the MSM policy and is by no means the end when it comes to the MSM policy. The GSRD community will continue to advocate and push forward for the complete removal of the policy and hope that MSM who practice safe sex will be allowed to donate blood and blood by-products across Canada in the near future.

This step forward will continue to lead to a positive impact on the younger generation's reaction to issues of social justice therefore potentially increasing blood donations and the blood supply. This change is also aligned with the government's evidence-based approach and its prioritization of research and science on the issue. I believe this is an important step forward and will eventually lead to an all-inclusive blood supply system.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Niemczak

CC: Simon Kennedy, Deputy Minister, Health Canada
Pierre Sabourin, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Products and Food Branch, Health Canada:
Cathy Parker, Acting Director General, Biologics & Genetic Therapies Directorate, Health Canada
Dr. Graham Sher, CEO, Canadian Blood Services
Don Lapierre, Manager, Stakeholder Relations, Canadian Blood Services